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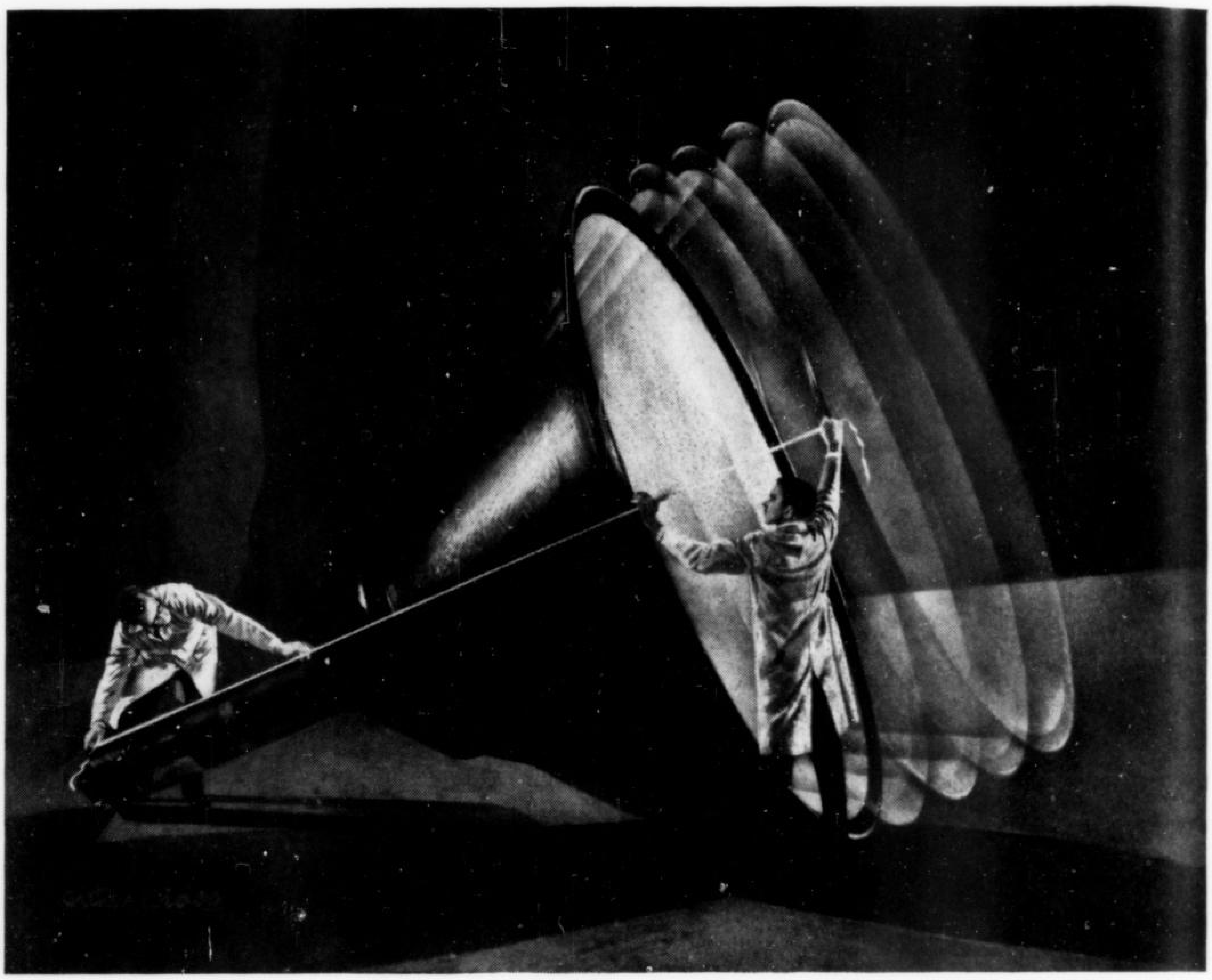

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COMMENTARY

THE U.N. TANGLE OVER JERUSALEM

Prospects for a Settlement

HAL LEHRMAN

BEHIND closely guarded walls somewhere in the broad but sparsely populated territories knit together by King Abdullah's British-trained Arab Legion, emissaries of Jordan and Israel are currently parleying for a treaty of peace. With the white-bearded Hashemite monarch in alert attendance on each occasion, the negotiators have already met six times, and every meeting has recorded progress toward a pact—the first to be achieved between the new Jewish state and any of the angry Arab neighbors ranged along its borders.

The rest of the world has more at stake in these talks than merely a formal cessation of armed hostility between two small countries in the far-off Middle East. The parleys, by all present tokens, are likely to shape the foundations for the final settlement of a crisis in which the hopes of three world religions—Moslem, Christian, Jewish—and the prestige of the United Nations are vastly involved: the struggle over the internationalization of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

A United Nations plan has been prepared for international control of Jerusalem's shrines without destroying the sovereignty of Israel and Jordan in the city they now share. There is every indication that the two states, once they have resolved their differences elsewhere, or even if they cannot, will set up a common front and negotiate a UN agreement based on this plan. Two facts give this serene vista a most sardonic tinge: the General Assembly's December resolution for complete internationalization is being discarded virtually *in toto* by the new UN plan that is supposed to implement it; and peace seems about to descend on Jerusalem only because this same new plan—or a negotiated rewriting of it—will satisfy the requirements of Israel and Jordan, whose feelings and wishes appeared entirely nonessential to the UN just a few weeks ago.

THE UN decision to internationalize the city of Jerusalem, which called forth prompt and vigorous reactions from Israel and Jordan, appeared to reopen a bitter controversy; but, paradoxically, the vote for internationalization may have had the effect of mobilizing forces that will eventually bring about a more equitable solution. HAL LEHRMAN here analyzes the political character of the problem and reports on the probable outcome of the latest and most complex chapter in the history of the new state. Mr. Lehrman has followed the Palestine situation for COMMENTARY through its vicissitudes of the past few years, and has won a wide reputation for reliability and objectivity. At present, in addition to his journalistic activities, Mr. Lehrman is lecturing before Jewish and other groups around the country on current international affairs as well as the problems of Israel and their impact on American Jewry. He was born in New York City in 1911 and studied at Cornell University.

On December 9, by a crushing majority of nearly three-fourths, the Assembly at Lake Success passed a resolution ignoring two years of bloody conflict in Palestine and resurrecting the internationalized Jerusalem envisaged in the original partition scheme of November 29, 1947. UN rule was proclaimed for the city proper and a generous belt of suburbs including Bethlehem. This whole area was to be designated as a *"corpus separatum"*—aptly Latin, for the Vatican had played a major role in the Assembly vote and the resolution had been introduced by an Australian Labor government anxious for Catholic support in a national election then impending. The Vatican-approved Australian resolution was made further notable by friendly Soviet amendments and Arab League endorsements, the most extraordinary three-way UN coalition in that body's history.

As passed, the resolution called for the completion of a "Statute of Jerusalem" left over from partition days. The Assembly expressed vague interest in a "democratization" of the rules under which the local populations were to live, but left little room for effective self-government and no room at all for Israeli and Jordan sovereignty. Named as the administrative arm of the UN in Jerusalem, the Trusteeship Council was sternly exhorted to refurbish the statute and put it straightway into effect.

Now there are several grave omissions in these firm instructions. The Trusteeship Council is told to go ahead and govern, but is not told how and with what. It is not advised where the money and personnel are coming from to support an international regime against the apparently solid opposition of one hundred thousand local Jewish residents, to say nothing of the Arabs in Jerusalem. Most particularly, the Council receives no clue as to where to begin looking for the large international police force—or army—possibly needed in view of vigorous Israeli and Hashemite pledges never to yield their respective halves of the city.

The Assembly failed to inform the Council on these matters because the Assembly had not the smallest idea. Spurred by the piety in the pre-Christmas air, the fatigue of a long agenda, and the persuasions of the Vatican, the Assembly simply stampeded itself into voting an unimplementable "solution" of the Jerusalem problem, passed the buck to the Council, and departed.

The Council, being composed of realistic men deliberating in an atmosphere of less haste and pressure than the Assembly, and required to devise a scheme that would not only look impressive in print but also work, has accommodated itself to the realities. After discreet consultations with spokesmen of the involved parties, including the Church, Council president Roger Garreau of France—which voted *for* the Assembly resolution—has produced a plan whose sole important resemblance to the resolution is that it pertains to Jerusalem and proposes to internationalize the Holy Places.

Instead of a sprawling *"corpus separatum"* of seventy-four square miles, the Garreau plan restricts the UN zone to two modest enclaves. One would encompass the Wailing Wall, the Christian Holy Places in the Old City and on Mount Zion, two narrow prongs of ground to the north, and a half-mile wedge into the New City enclosing the YMCA and the King David Hotel (the latter presumably for the private solace of future UN administrators). The other enclave would contain the territory around Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives, inclusively. The road linking these enclaves through Mount Scopus, and the southerly road to Bethlehem, are to be internationalized, as is Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. Everything else in the Jerusalem area is to be *ceded* outright to the Israeli or Jordan authority whose armed forces are now in occupation.

A preliminary Garreau draft demilitarized the whole Jerusalem area. But account had to be taken of Israeli apprehensiveness as to the fate of an open city in the event of renewed Arab assault. Therefore the region is now only to be *neutralized*, an important difference. This bars use of the city as a military base in case of renewed Arab-Israeli war, but it permits the quartering of troops and their employment in defense of Jerusalem if attacked.

A single economy is to be established for the two sides of the city, with a common currency and free mutual access of pilgrims, officials, residents, and goods. The UN Governor will supervise the international zone and maintenance of its Holy Places. He will oversee the execution of the reciprocal guarantees for neutralization and free movement. In all other matters respecting their territories, Jordan and Israel will be sovereign.

INITIALLY, the Trusteeship Council asked Garreau to have his plan in time for the Council's reopening at Geneva in mid-January. The plan was ready, but when the Geneva meeting convened the first item on the agenda—good for several weeks of time consumption—was the Italian colonies, not Jerusalem. It seemed highly probable that all parties were waiting out the Israeli-Jordan treaty talks, in order to give a Jerusalem settlement its largest possible chances for success.

Those chances, at the moment, look very good to persons in a position to make predictions about the unpredictable UN with minimum risk of being made foolish by events. Estimating *present* moods and probabilities, the likelihoods are as follows:

1. The Trusteeship Council, aware that it can get off the hook only by a violent wrench away from the Assembly's futile resolution, will solemnly pretend that the Garreau plan (or a revision of it worked out among all elements concerned) *is* an implementation of the Assembly's wishes.

2. The Vatican, having won a thumping theoretical victory in the Assembly, will content itself with the best practical arrangements it can get for control of the Holy Places—thereby facilitating a final decision in the Trusteeship Council and sidestepping a return of the dispute to a new Assembly.

3. Israel, which indicated its readiness to accept direct UN control of the Holy Places even before the Assembly vote, will be willing to settle for a UN zone that will diminish her sovereignty only a little more than such control.

4. Abdullah will be happy to yield a few minor segments of territory in exchange for the huge prestige accruing from recognition of his sovereign status in Arab Jerusalem.

5. Britain will be happy at the prospect of enhancing her own shaky position in the Middle East through extension of Abdullah's legally acknowledged authority.

6. The United States, relieved to see the Jerusalem chapter closed at minimum cost and friction, will support any plan acceptable to the Vatican, Jordan, and Israel.

7. The Soviet and Arab blocs will roar with pain, but their two votes out of twelve in the Trusteeship Council will not avail to plunge the UN back into the dilemma of all-or-nothing internationalization.

A glance behind the scenes of recent and current developments in the Jerusalem story may serve to illuminate the future.

ON reliable authority this writer learns that the iron chain of events which inexorably led the General Assembly to decree a Jerusalem solution that nobody in the world knew how to enforce began to be forged when, at an early and crucial moment, a Mexican delegate missed an obscure subcommittee meeting.

A seventeen-nation subcommittee of the Special Political Committee had been invited to compose a workable plan for recommendation by the Committee to the Assembly. This plan was to be distilled from a long list of conflicting plans, at the chronological top of which stood Australia's proposal for total internationalization. Nearly everyone realized the Australian project would not do. A motion was offered to suspend its priority, enabling the subcommittee to try blending various proposals into a *new* and *practical* scheme. But the motion lost by one vote—the unfortunate absent Mexican's, which would have favorably broken a 7-7 tie. Automatically, the Australian project had to come up next. Compelled now to declare themselves on a matter of Catholic principle, delegates sensitive to the Vatican felt they could vote only yes. The Australian measure won.

Having approved one plan, what was the point in discussing any other? So the subcommittee went home. In due course its report reached the Special Political Committee, which, functioning under the same inhibitions about the Vatican, also said yes, 35 to 13. If the vote had been secret, certain delegates admitted, they would have said no. The Swedes, who did say no anyway, expressed openly the general bafflement which others were feeling covertly: "We have always maintained," declared the Swedes plaintively, "that some measure of agreement ought to be forthcoming from the parties most intimately affected." Two days later, the Assembly, its eyes tightly shut, went down the same dead end, 38 to 14.

The Assembly could blandly instruct the Trusteeship Council not to allow anything "to divert it from adopting and implementing" a statute for Jerusalem, but the Council found itself incapable of doing so in its very first test. Ordering Israel to cease and desist from making Jerusalem into a capital, it mustered only five votes—the Council's seven other members abstaining. The USSR, interested only in beating Abdullah about the ears, abstained. The British and the Americans, whose two negative votes in the Assembly had been just two votes but who now became all-important because they possessed the UN's major resources for any implementing, also abstained. The Chinese delegate, with far-off headaches of his own, abstained. Even the Australian, rapped on the knuckles by a new government back home that was less interested in Catholic votes, abstained. It quickly occurred to Council chairman Garreau that the one way out might be a statute that would get acceptance *inside Jerusalem* by bypassing the Assembly's resolution in effect while suavely pretending to respect it.

If the Garreau plan comes formally before the Trusteeship Council, the Soviet member is likely to object—and rightly—that it nullifies the Assembly's decision. The only Arab member, Iraq, will most likely do the same. Should the view of these two prevail, the whole muddle would have to be tossed back at the Assembly again. But will it? Two Latin delegations—Catholics, as it happens—the Dominican in the Council and the Argentine outside it, have lately been suggesting to the Israelis how agreeable it would be to settle for a plan along the Garreau lines. Moreover, although the Garreau project was quite plainly published in the New York *Times,* it has up to now drawn not the faintest objection from the Vatican.

MEEK Assembly acceptance of the Australian resolution had impressively demonstrated the Church's political power. Nobody had believed the resolution would survive even the Special Political Committee—until the Vatican ordered its diplomatic representatives abroad to call on the foreign ministers of their accredited governments. The result was instantaneous and startling. Delegates changed overnight, almost in the middle of their flights of oratory, from fighting the resolution to supporting it.

It is estimated that at least a dozen votes went over, solidifying a bloc of seventeen Catholic states. What makes this show of Church strength doubly impressive is the fact that the "converted" delegates were aware they were voting for a political impossibility.

The victory, however, was limited. Apparently none knew this better than the Church. True, the official Vatican radio had intimated a belief that the Australian project promised "real and effective internationalization," and a few days after the vote Vatican officials were expressing concern over "Israel's defiant attitude"—as if the latter were a complete surprise to them. But the Curia knew how to assess its gains. The Assembly's action had enhanced the Vatican's bargaining power on Jerusalem, reinforced the Church's moral ground, given the advocates of internationalization the comfort of international endorsement, and improved their public relations position vis-àvis the Israelis. But, short of dispatching the Pope's own Swiss Guard, they had nothing with which to implement the resolution. It gave them an authoritative piece of paper at Lake Success, but not one added jot of effective power in Jerusalem.

Vatican realism, therefore, dictated a retreat from victorious non-compromise in the Assembly to hard-headed dickering for the best possible terms in practice. This realism seems to be the Trusteeship Council's best hope. It is enormously significant that Garreau conferred with Cardinal Spellman before the French plan's publication in the *Times.* (Bizarrely, details had leaked out a few days earlier to the Jewish *Day* and the *Morning Journal,* but one must assume the Vatican does not closely watch the New York Yiddish press.) Officially, the Cardinal referred Garreau to the Papal Secretariat of State for comment, but unofficially, it is understood, he intimated that the plan might well become a basis for parleying with the Vatican. Further evidence came soon after in a brief news item from Jerusalem. Herein it was disclosed that the Apostolic Delegate to the Holy City, Archbishop Gustavo Testa, had brought the Pope's greetings in person to none other than King Abdullah—and reportedly discussed with that monarch "a new French plan" for Jerusalem.

In view of the Vatican's brilliant performance at the Assembly, Abdullah has probably begun to appreciate the importance of the Church as a factor in the situation. Abdullah's friendly enemy, the government of Israel, was not that astute. Israeli spokesmen now frankly admit the Vatican caught them far off base.

Troubled by evidence that reports of Israel's alleged mistreatment of minorities were Catholic-inspired, Tel Aviv did make efforts early last year to conciliate the Church by arrangements for the restoration and repair of Catholic sanctuaries. But by last summer it became clear that the Vatican was advancing from propaganda to direct diplomatic action. In fact, a special Vatican representative on matters of "Near Eastern welfare," Mgr. Thomas J. MacMahon of New York, who is also a close associate of Cardinal Spellman, virtually announced to Prime Minister David Ben Gurion in a stormy August interview that Tel Aviv might expect the strongest opposition from the Church in the struggle for Jerusalem.

Making a few exploratory steps to forestall a possible diplomatic line-up of Catholic states, the Israeli Foreign Ministry was encouraged by its findings. The French, in particular, looked friendly. Then top Israeli observers returned home from the United States with assurances that, come what may, the Church could never overcome an Anglo-American coalition and get the necessary two-thirds vote to push an unworkable scheme for total internationalization through the General Assembly. This convinced Moshe Sharett, and ultimately Ben Gurion, too.

From then on the Israeli government behaved as if Jerusalem were safe and secure. When the Assembly convened, Jerusalem stood far down on a long agenda, and the confident Sharett therefore delayed coming to New York until a few days before the dispute reached the floor. Soundings of official foreign opinion by Israeli diplomats abroad were considered unnecessary, as was lobbying by Israeli delegates at Lake Success. When debate started, messages to Tel Aviv, from Israeli delegates and correspondents, were glowingly optimistic. The delegation cabled that a two-thirds majority for the Australian resolution was out of the question because the resolution was too extreme. Light dawned only when the Special Political Committee, which operates by simple majority, gave the resolution better than two-thirds. To be fair, it must be stressed that this surprised everybody, not only Israeli delegates. But by then it was too late.

Having been lulled by false expectations, outraged Israel reacted with double indignation when the bad news broke.

The Jerusalem City Council solemnly resolved never to separate itself from Israel. The Mayor, Daniel Auster, was quoted as swearing that internationalization could proceed "only over our dead bodies." Ten thousand Jerusalemites, led by their chief rabbis, marched in processional out of the city to the fresh grave of Theodor Herzl and there pledged the awful Psalmist oath: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." On Tel Aviv walls appeared mimeographed appeals for disobedience and threats of assault against all agents of the UN edict. The posted handbills bore the signature: "The Men of the Freedom of Jerusalem"—ominously reminiscent of the "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel," the Stern Gang of the mandate and the Arab war. The still unsolved murder of another UN official on a less repugnant mission, the Swedish mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, came grimly back to mind. Old-style terrorism could hardly return on Israeli territory, where every police and army officer was likely to be a graduate of the underground himself and hence as aware as any potential terrorist of the members and methods of a revived underground. But if Jerusalem were made "independent," if Israel's government were relieved of the right and duty to maintain order, who would be left to restrain the hotheads, and who could say how many thousands of youths from Jerusalem and elsewhere would not be ready to stake their lives for the redemption of Israel's ancient capital?

To this writer—as to all Zionist, most non-Zionist, and even much non-Jewish opinion here and abroad—the Assembly's brand of internationalization seems quite indefensible on moral, political, religious, and, above all, practical grounds. It may not be "just about the worst blunder committed by the UN," as one commentator has suggested, but there can be little argument with the New York *Herald Tribune's* editorial view that "stability in Palestine scarcely seems likely if the UN persists in an outdated plan of setting up a third state in a country barely large enough for two."

When the Tel Aviv government denounced the UN decision, it only expressed what was in the Israeli people's hearts and minds and what was borne out by the facts. Ninety-five per cent of the New City's population is Jewish. The UN itself permitted its 1947 internationalization of Jerusalem, as part of Palestine's partition, to become a dead letter by failing to aid or neutralize the Holy City during the Arab-Jewish war. The Jews alone defended Jerusalem, at considerable loss of life. Israel alone helped the people of Jerusalem and, with their full consent, saved them from postwar inanition by integrating their city in Israel's own political, economic, and social structure. Both morally and physically, internationalization could not be enforced against the wishes of the local population. Moreover, Israel had been, and continued to be, ready to negotiate for full international protection of the Holy Places with the UN, whose main interest as spokesman of the world community, after all, hardly seemed extendable beyond those Holy Places.

Nonetheless, many in this country—and among the more reflective sections of the Israeli public—privately deplored the tone and content of the official Tel Aviv reaction. It was not that the government lacked provocation for its utterances, but rather that the utterances seemed unnecessary and even partly incorrect—and therefore a shade unstatesmanlike, if not positively harmful to Israel's common cause.

FOR one thing, although a Ben Gurion declaration concerning physical transfer of government offices was distorted by headline-writers and did not actually proclaim Jerusalem as a *new* capital, it did give the impression that Israel was suddenly doing just that. This was wrong on two counts: the movement of official bureaus from Tel Aviv was simply the continuation of an old process—and Jerusalem, though always regarded spiritually and traditionally as *the* capital, could not yet become a capital in full and practical effect. As long as the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Defense remained in Tel Aviv, Israel at most would merely have two "semi-capitals." A calm, dignified pursuance of already established policy on the transfer of lesser offices to Jerusalem along with the Knesset would have obtained all the advantages of a *fait accompli* without unnecessarily tweaking the beard of the UN, which, at least nominally, represents world opinion. The Knesset's subsequent proclamation that Jerusalem had resumed the status of a capital from the moment of Israel's rebirth, gratuitously reaffirmed a legalism. It failed to add anything substantial to Israel's already strong case.

For the man in the world's streets Tel Aviv's fulminations made it appear that the argument was strictly between the world and Israel. But Jordan really should have been much more involved. According to Ottoman and British mandate catalogues, *all* the Holy Places are in Abdullah-held territory. Even on a special Vatican list a mere five per cent of the sites—the shrines on Mt. Zion—are in Israeli territory. Yet Abdullah let the Israelis do all the shouting. Having already warned Lake Success that his portion of Jerusalem would not be surrendered, he did allow the Arabic press in the Old City and the Arabic radio at Ramallah to rant against the UN's decision and the Arab League's support of it; but, advised by the British to keep silent, he permitted Israel's leaders the exclusive satisfaction of repeatedly hurling official defiances.

Indeed, Ben Gurion went so far as to get himself quoted in an Associated Press dispatch to the effect that "Israel is aligned against the whole world." Now even if this were true, it would not seem wise for a prime minister to insist on it. But it was not true, various governments, including the American, having voted against the Assembly's decision, and many more since then showing marked apathy about its application.

Israeli spokesmen might have foregone the fireworks and relied on the strength of the Jewish position in Jerusalem and the impotence of any internationalizing agency. There appears, however, to be an invigorating snap in the bright air of young Israel that impels her leaders to sound off at home with an abandon they judiciously restrain abroad. Israeli speeches at Lake Success are generally models of style, logic, and controlled emotion. In the Knesset and elsewhere in Israel, however, some statesmen hold forth as if nobody were listening outside the doors. Even as seasoned a hand as Sharett slips occasionally. It is reported that he earnestly cabled Ben Gurion from Lake Success to be more prudent after the "Israel-against-the-world" statement; but no sooner was he home himself than the Foreign Minister committed the greater enormity of notifying the Knesset that the Church was seeking to avenge "an ancient sin and settle an account of nineteen centuries' standing"—thereby seemingly accepting on behalf of all Jews a responsibility they had never before seriously considered theirs. The net result of such talk could only be to alienate a little more good will abroad.

In contrast, a policy of conserving "good will" has been commendably followed with Jordan. Israel has wisely refrained from any official comment on the Garreau plan so as not to jeopardize her talks with Abdullah by seeming to negotiate behind his back. A further reason for caution may well have been Israeli awareness that Garreau's focusing of belated UN attention on essentials—the Holy Places—would put Abdullah more and more on the spot, a pleasant prospect which ought not to be disturbed by premature Israeli pronouncements.

At this writing, meanwhile, this correspondent understands that only one issue remains outstanding for a complete Israeli-Jordan settlement. There will be reciprocal access to Jerusalem through Arab-held Latrun and over the Israeli-held Bethlehem road. A general territorial accord will be based approximately on the armistice lines. Both parties respect each other's interest in Jerusalem and will make common cause against undue extensions of UN control. They will try to restrict international rule to the Holy Places, without overlapping on secular ground. If this fails, their effort will be to squeeze the UN's enclave as narrow as possible (and each, undoubtedly, will be more amenable to concessions at the other's expense than its own). If necessary, the Israelis may be prepared to yield Mount Zion, with the Church of the Dormition and the Tomb of David—claimed by Christians as the Cenacle, reputed site of the Last Supper—and also admit UN authority over the Government House area between the Old and New Cities, where the Arabs now hold more than the Jews. A possible arrangement is envisaged similar to that of the Vatican in Rome, with sovereign rights for the UN inside a zone of Holy Places and extra-territorial rights over certain points "beyond the walls."

Israel accepts the principle that Abdullah is entitled to some sort of corridor to Gaza. But does this mean simply the right of passage over Israeli territory, or will the corridor legally divide Israel in two? Is the corridor to be just the few yards' width of the actual road or a broad strip of land amounting to a territorial cession? This is the tough haggling point that still blocks a meeting of the minds on an over-all treaty. (There is also the problem of Gaza itself, now occupied by Egypt—but the Israelis are letting Abdullah worry about that. He apparently calculates the Egyptians will be glad to pull out and leave him with the 220,000 Arab refugees crowding Gaza today.)

Following the approved rules of Oriental negotiation, Jordan and Israel have been exchanging their rock-bottom prices on the corridor deal and then have gone off to sulk in their respective tents till someone weakens. The Israelis know that time is pressing on them, but they are hopeful that Abdullah will eventually let them have the better part of the bargain because he needs a settlement even more than they.

As already noted, Abdullah's near-monopoly on the Holy Places makes him more vulnerable to UN attentions. Also, the General Assembly's leaning toward "municipal autonomy" for the peoples of Jerusalem is a particular threat to Abdullah; the Jews in the New City would cleave to Israel whatever happened, but the Arabs in Abdullah's sector are mostly Palestinian, with small allegiance to Jordan. Finally, the monarch sorely needs a pact with Israel to relieve his isolation from his irate fellow-members of the Arab League. (Israel is also isolated in the Arab world—but she is more used to loneliness.) The Israel-Jordan Armistice gave Abdullah an implied recognition of his *de facto* hold on Western Palestine. An Israel-Jordan peace treaty would make this recognition explicit and give Abdullah effective *de jure* status in his new territories, at any rate in Israel's eyes.

The British are at least as interested as Abdullah, to put it mildly, in seeing their puppet well established on Palestinian soil. Abdullah is London's creature, and anything that builds him up in Palestine builds the British up in the Middle East, where they badly need propping. Very sensibly, Garreau did not go to Abdullah's emissary when he wanted a Jordan opinion on his plan—he went to Sir Alexander Cadogan.

Cadogan, it is known, was noncommittal. He suggested that the plan should wait upon the Israel-Jordan treaty. Then both signatories could face the UN in Jerusalem together—after which, Sir Alexander suggested, the Garreau proposals might be convenient. Clearly, the British will drive as hard a Jerusalem bargain for Jordan, and indirectly for Israel, as they can. They have no hankering for an international authority that would provide a political springboard in the Middle East for the Church and even possibly facilitate the return of that "Catholic" state, France, to a region from which Britain ousted her only a few years ago.

The British line on Jerusalem is visible and unswerving. Not so the American. The activity of the two powers in Tel Aviv immediately after the Assembly's vote for internationalization was characteristic. The British Minister rushed to the Israeli Foreign Office with solid, practical advice to get on with the Jordan talks. The American Ambassador also lost no time in making a call, but merely to caution Israel not to flout the UN by open disobedience. Perfectly good advice, too, but typically negative. Such negativeness – in this case a symptom of indecision – has marked the whole unsteady course of American policy on Jerusalem.

As long ago as the Paris session of the General Assembly in late 1948, the State

Department was indicating its loss of belief in the workability of an internationalized Jerusalem. American representatives even consulted the Israelis about a tentative plan scrapping the original partition scheme for Jerusalem and setting Israeli-Jordan trusteeships over the two halves of the city. Throughout most of 1949, during the long months of the Palestine Conciliation Commission's (PCC) shadow-boxing at Lausanne, the Americans kept on assuring the Israelis that the United States definitely opposed internationalization. Even in the fairly acrimonious Washington letters to Tel Aviv complaining about intransigence on Arab refugees and other matters, Jerusalem was not disputed. Washington apparently understood Israel's determination not to yield her portion of the Holy City, and even seemed to sympathize.

It was a bit startling, therefore, when the PCC, composed of France, Turkey, and the United States, nevertheless came forth with a recommendation to the Assembly last fall to internationalize no less than some one hundred square miles in and around Jerusalem, permanently demilitarizing the area and banning mass immigration into it.

Israel (and Jordan) yelled bloody murder. Washington looked unaccountably surprised, as if Tel Aviv's reaction were quite novel. The Americans immediately retreated. They —and then the French and the Turks— hastened to say that it was all a misunderstanding, that the PCC really meant to leave Jerusalem's political jurisdiction to Israel and Jordan. The PCC itself took the curious step of issuing a formal "clarification" to that effect, though this hardly squared with the original text. But by this time the Arab-Soviet-Vatican chase was in full cry for much sterner arrangements. Whereupon the Americans overnight started opposing internationalization all over again, suddenly rediscovering that no plan would work unless the people in Jerusalem accepted it—a simple truth which would have avoided much confusion if the United States had consistently expounded it from the beginning.

Despite this renewed clarity of vision, the United States made no effort to lobby against the impractical Australian plan, merely speaking and voting against it as a single member of the Assembly. It is only now, through its commanding position on the Trusteeship Council and its emphasis on prior Israel-Jordan acceptance of *any* plan, that the United States may at last contribute to a statesmanlike settlement.

It may be safely assumed that, deep down, Washington is genuinely averse to international zones. We have had unhappy experiences with them: Danzig in the past, for instance, and Trieste currently. An international Jerusalem would inevitably involve the United States in special obligations, as the likeliest provider of protection and financial support; it would open a troublesome loophole for Soviet meddling; it would annoy Britain, whom the United States has no desire to annoy on this point.

Why, then, our vacillating policy? Unless it was just plain ineptness, the obvious answer is probably nearest to the correct one: that there are, after all, twenty-five million Catholics in this country—a formidable consideration, especially in an election year. Seen in this light, one commences to fathom American maneuvers as a gradual retreat from internationalization while sedulously avoiding a position of leadership in resistance to the Church. Such an interpretation clarifies our policy even now: Washington wants Israel and Jordan to get together, but is simultaneously urging Israel to reach some kind of accommodation with the Vatican.

THE VATICAN thus holds the key. Insofar as it is presently showing signs of its traditional genius for realism and compromise, prospects of a settlement look bright. That settlement—of the single most complex emotional issue in the world today—will not only be a triumph of reasonableness. It will administer a solid setback to those two agents of confusion and entanglement in the Jerusalem crisis: the Arabs and the Russians.

As the UN's chief Lebanese delegate admitted, his bloc would have hailed the Assembly resolution even if the vote could have no practical effect in Jerusalem at all but simply gave the Arab world a "moral bolstering" and the Israelis a notice "that there are limits to their ambitions." To accomplish this the Arab League was ready to sabotage Moslem rule over the Dome of the Rock and all the other Moslem-revered shrines in Jerusalem, incidentally cutting the throat of the League's most ambitious kinsman, Abdullah. Jerusalem was evidently not the thing at stake. The transparent Arab purpose was to set the world against Israel, and Israel against the world. From such a conflict the Arabs could derive enhanced prestige and good will as the Israeli supply of these commodities dwindled. They could employ the UN to greater and greater effect as a rostrum for their general lamentations over Israeli iniquity. And they could, under cover of their rhetoric and the universal din, labor more speedily in preparation for their "second round" with the Jewish state. A defeat of these intentions by a rational solution of the Jerusalem dispute will be welcome to all who hope for Middle East peace.

The bringing of sweet reason to the muddle over Jerusalem will also frustrate the designs of the USSR. It is commonly but, I think, erroneously supposed that the Kremlin's major interest in internationalizing the Holy City is to obtain entry into the Middle East through a door obligingly held open by the UN. As a matter of fact, the Soviets have only one vote – and no veto – in the Trusteeship Council, and the chances of infiltrating Soviet agents disguised as UN personnel would be remarkably slim under the close scrutiny such personnel would be sure to receive. The nuisance value of the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan in Jerusalem would be only slightly greater in a UN-ruled city than it already is, thanks to Israel's great haste to concede Soviet ownership of Russian religious properties acquired in the days of the Czars. The truth is that the Soviets, like the Arabs, are not interested in internationalization for its own sake but for its negative possibilities.

UN sovereignty in Jerusalem would damage the British by weakening Abdullah—a result that many good people might applaud if only it did not also weaken Israel too at this juncture and serve Soviet purposes in the larger arena of a divided world. Perhaps even more important, an unworkable UN apparatus imposed on Jerusalem would create unrest and dissension. The very fact that internationalization is impractical makes it attractive to Moscow, because any attempt to enforce it could only mean trouble—and trouble in areas dominated by Western "fascist-imperialists" is manna for Kremlin intriguers. The wings of peace fanning gently over a Jerusalem amicably governed in its respective areas by Jews, Arabs, and keepers of the Holy Places will soothe any troubled waters in which the Soviets may be hoping to fish.

At all events, whatever the decision on Jerusalem, the USSR has lost heavy credits in Israel by its unprincipled alliance with the Vatican and the Arab League.

Even earlier, the anti-emigration and Zionist-baiting policies of the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe had seriously disturbed Israel's balance in her tightrope walk of neutrality between East and West. Press and parliament were becoming more and more outspoken in their blasts against Moscow, and the Prime Minister, goaded by Ana Pauker's slamming of the border in the face of Rumanian Jews yearning for Israel, had indulged himself publicly in a Churchillian reference to "the rabbi's daughter who refuses to let our people go."

The cynical Soviet performance on Jerusalem, however, has hammered the last nail into the coffin of Israel's neutrality. Even the three noisy Communists in the Knesset were reduced to stammers in their feeble apologetics for the Kremlin. The mass of the country, parliament, and government has lost its last illusions about the need or efficacy of the neutrality fiction. Instead of promoting its cause in the Middle East by sowing unrest in Jerusalem, the USSR has planted hatred for itself in Israel and in all likelihood has dealt itself a minor but potentially aching knock on the head in the global cold war.

DISCRIMINATION IN THE COLLEGES DIES HARD

Progress Report on an American Sore Spot

EDWARD N. SAVETH

MOST American Jews continue to react to discrimination in the universities with a sense of outraged hurt and despair—a reaction that some observers find excessive. Objectively, the American Jewish community is, as of 1950, more prosperous and more secure than in decades past. Yet the very thought of the quota system in the colleges seems to shake the community to its very roots. It is as if this situation symbolized a kind of rejection at the hands of America.

Need one really wonder at this—when one considers what higher education means to all Americans, and perhaps especially to American Jews? The early Jewish immigrants used to refer to America as the "golden land." The core of hope in this phrase still survived even after the phrase itself had taken on an irony bred by the poverty and struggle of the slum. There was always the prospect that "the children" would be able to "get ahead" by "getting an education." Between the slum and the golden vista there stretched the educational ladder.

Nor was the value placed on higher education by Jews a unique instance; it reflected, perhaps a little more intensely, the conviction of all Americans. The common faith was—and year by year increasingly is—that education would permit the promise of America to be realized. Was not America different from Europe precisely because the climb up the educational ladder was a free and open contest, in which all advantages of birth and social position were shed, and only the individual's worth and talent counted? And if this were not the case, would not the American dream end as a variant of the ugly European pattern, with its many different ladders, most of which raised one only a few inches from the ground while an exclusive few stretched to the very top?

It has been heartening to see, too, how America has moved steadily forward to make good on this promise. To all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and by tradition, a new human right has been added, at least in theory—the right to higher education. The only prerequisite: to want it and to be qualified for it. The burgeoning of the state and city colleges, the multiplication of scholarships, and finally the report of the President's Commission on Higher Education in 1948, all point in this direction.

Nor has the confidence placed in American education—especially higher education—proved misplaced: many have gone from the very bottom to the very top. As a result, we are socially a democratic society, more so than England, for example, where for all its economic leveling a venerable system of selective higher education tends to freeze opportunity. On the other hand, the American hope is still far from fulfilled: some who might have gone to the top were rudely prevented—for reasons that have little to do with ability but much to do with prejudice.

THE system of "quotas" maintained in the vast majority of our colleges and professional schools, flying in the face of the basic American principle of equal opportunity, is perhaps among the most frustrating of the various forms of discrimination practiced in this country. EDWARD N. SAVETH here marshals the facts in the case and tries to appraise the validity of arguments made on behalf of current admission practices. Mr. Saveth, an expert in "minority" problems in the field of education, is on the staff of the American Jewish Committee, and teaches a course in American historical writing at the New School. He is the author of a book, *American Historians and European Immigrants,* and has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY—most recently with the article "Good Stocks and Lesser Breeds" in the May 1949 number. Mr. Saveth was born in 1915 and earned his doctorate at Columbia University.

Educational opportunity has been good, it seems on the way to becoming better—but some ugly blemishes remain.

How shall we not show concern over the question of discrimination in the universities, in view of how central and crucial higher education is in the American scheme of things? All the more reason, however, for our concern to be sober and informed, especially since the question is a complicated one. Simple black and simple white turn out upon closer study to be merely the end points of a spectrum full of subtle shadings, and what at first glance seems a stark struggle between right and wrong often turns out to be a conflict between different "rights."

To what extent does racial discrimination in American higher education affect Jews? What can be done about it?

THERE are three outstanding facts as regards discrimination in American higher education:

(1) There *is* discrimination against American Negroes,* Jews, Italians, Catholics, and others, because of their "race," religion, or national origin.

(2) This discrimination does *not* prevent members of these groups, with the exception of the Negroes, from acquiring some form of higher education.

(3) The problem of discrimination in medical schools is especially acute and especially complex.

The fact of frequent discrimination few even bother to deny. The New York State Temporary Commission on the Need for a State University obtained confidential reports from 206 universities; twenty-five *admitted* to discriminatory practices. Occasionally, a university official will be outspoken, as when President Ernest Hopkins of Dartmouth acknowledged the existence of a quota for Jewish students, or when former Dean William S. Ladd of Cornell University medical school writes: "We limit the number of Jews admitted to each class to roughly the proportion of Jews in the population in this state." The few cases of such frankness having led to public outcry, most universities prefer to keep silent.

However, a recent Public Affairs Pamphlet summarizes the situation quite convincingly.* In the particular group of high school seniors studied—and it was large and representative—56 per cent of the applications by Jewish students (of course, most students file more than one application) to various colleges were accepted, as against 67 per cent of the Catholic applications and 77 per cent of the Protestant. These figures need qualification, for "most Jewish applicants (80 per cent) come from the Northeast and that section . . . has a much lower acceptance rate than the country as a whole." Why the Northeast does so badly in the first place is unexplained; perhaps a traditional anti-urban, anti-Eastern sentiment plays a role at least as important as a desire for geographical representation. Be that as it may, when the Northeast sample is examined separately, "the chances of an application being accepted are: 54 per cent for Jewish, 59 per cent for Catholic, and 61 per cent for Protestant." These percentages in themselves are far from sensational. What is important is that the percentage differentials are remarkably stable whichever way the data are re-assembled, and seem attributable only to discrimination.

"On the other hand," Ivy and Ross point out, "while the Jewish student encounters discrimination, that bias does not prevent him from attending college." For though applications by Jewish students have a smaller chance for acceptance, the Jewish student files applications to more colleges. The overall results are rather surprising: "88 per cent of all Protestant, 87 per cent of all Jewish, but only 81 per cent of all Catholic *applicants* were accepted" by some college.

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*Educational discrimination against the Negro is so appalling in its extent, and its ramifications are so complex, that it would require separate lengthy consideration. The situation of the Italian Catholic is similar to that of the Jew, though perhaps less extreme.

**Religion and Race: Barriers to College?* by A. C. Ivy and Irwin Ross. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 153. Much of the statistical information in the pamphlet is derived from a study conducted by the Elmo Roper organization for the American Council on Education.

It would seem that discrimination exists, but that it is no very great hindrance to a Jewish student's entering college, though it may definitely hinder him from entering the particular college he had in mind. "The Jewish applicant is much less likely than his non-Jewish colleague to gain admittance to the college of his first or second or even third choice."

But even this generalization is qualified by geographical and other considerations: "A Jewish student has as good a chance as a Christian of comparable academic standing in gaining admittance to a college in his home city." He is at a disadvantage when he applies to colleges outside his home city or state. On the other hand, smaller colleges discriminate more against Jewish students with superior records than do larger ones, and the undergraduate schools, at least, of such large universities as Chicago and Pennsylvania do not discriminate at all.

What does this add up to? Is it—as some might suggest—nothing more than a generally nasty inconvenience with occasional examples of real individual hardship? For the Jewish candidate for college entrance, does the struggle against discrimination boil down largely to the struggle to be admitted in relatively large numbers to Dartmouth and other private Eastern colleges of similar standing? (That Podunk Junior College does not admit many Jews is not likely to cause much heartache.)

There may be some Jews who will pronounce themselves unconcerned as to whether the sons of their "wealthier brethren" will be able, while obtaining a college education, to rub elbows with the offspring of the "first families" of America; they suspect the motives of those who are anxious to see their children registered at an Ivy League college; they sense snobbishness, "assimilationism," or worse. Their point of view is understandable but nonetheless narrow-minded. For the struggle to be a Jew and not thereby to suffer discrimination at the hands of the admissions board of a "name" college is no mere dog-fight for special privilege from which the main body of the Jewish community can afford to stand aloof.

It might be further said, in attempting to dismiss the matter peremptorily: these universities, in contrast to state and city institutions of higher education, are private, and are therefore entitled to pursue private aims and goals, and to set up whatever standards of admission suit their private fancies. But one notes that no university argues its case in these terms; however much it may—and legitimately so—seek to keep its machinery of control in its own hands, it defines its purposes and programs in terms of the public interest and the needs of our democratic society.

And these definitions are not merely prompted by public relations considerations or as *quid pro quo* for tax exemptions: the briefest discussion with university officials reveals that they must be taken as genuinely representing the private universities' own version of their role and responsibilities. Though privately owned and administered, they present themselves as in the forefront of American institutions concerned with the public weal. It is therefore not irrelevant to indicate to them the serious public implications of some of their private practices.

The basic fact is that the American college, public and private, is as much a social and economic institution as it is an educational one. One of the prime functions of the American college—and they openly and gladly have assumed it—is to serve as an avenue of mobility in our open industrial society. It aims to train for leadership in a democracy.

It does not—as was the tradition in English universities—aim to train members of a certain class for leadership, but to seek leaders wherever they may present themselves in our national population. Our state universities, with their open doors, are the embodiment of this democratic ideal. It is strange—even dangerous—that those private, "name" universities that especially pride themselves on the leaders they train, seem often to act more in accord with the now defunct ideal of a hereditary elite than with the prevailing American ideal they orally profess. These private colleges do indeed train leaders: the dominant groups in America today—its social, economic, and cultural hierarchy—are in large part made up of their graduates. But insofar as these universities practice discrimination, they are implicated in a conspiracy against the very values they protest they serve so well. They would form and preserve leadership for a democracy on a caste basis.

Educational discrimination is no isolated aberration. It is but one face of that social discrimination whose goal is the fencing off of self-selecting and self-perpetuating "elites." As Carey McWilliams pointed out in his article in the November 1947 COMMENTARY, social discrimination does really matter, for social discrimination aims to cancel out the democratic factor and populate the top rungs of the social ladder with the "select." The fight against educational discrimination in the "name" colleges may directly involve only a relatively small number of Jewish families; but in its success or failure are involved the very principles of a democratic society. If discrimination should survive, it means that Jews—and other groups, too—will have been semi-officially defined as second-class citizens who must learn to "know their place." And if Jews should cease to be discontented at their exclusion from the "name" colleges, it will be testimony that they have indeed learned "their place."

All those who accept seriously the promise of American democracy—that it is a democracy of talent rather than an aristocracy of birth or earlier wealth—have reason to be alarmed at this prospect.

DR. ERNEST M. HOPKINS, retiring president of Dartmouth, has said: "Dartmouth is a Christian college founded for the Christianization of its students." In point of fact, Dr. Hopkins is undeniably correct in stating that Dartmouth was founded for this purpose. But that was a long time ago. If Dartmouth is a "Christian college" today, it still is very different from the "Christian college" it originally was. It is certainly no longer Christian in the religious sense of that term—its curriculum is as heavily indebted to Western secular wisdom as it is to the specifically Christian (or more accurately: Judeo-Christian) heritage. Actually, what Dr. Hopkins seems to mean is that Dartmouth exists to turn out what is best described by the phrase "Christian gentlemen" —and by this is meant nothing theological, but rather "gentlemen" with the tastes, habits, and manners of the British upper classes of the 18th and 19th centuries. The word "Christian" here designates social ideal, not religious doctrine.

The question arises: how compatible is the secular American democracy that has evolved over the last one hundred and fifty years with its great institutions of learning, most of which were founded by religious denominations and in terms of a hierarchical English social structure? The founding fathers did *not*, after all, establish a "Christian gentlemen's democracy"—they established a secular democracy for all Americans.

With regard to authentically denominational schools, there is no quarrel: no Jew has the inalienable right to study at Union Theological Seminary or Fordham (though some do), just as no Catholic can demand to be enrolled at the Jewish Theological Seminary. But there are a host of non-denominational colleges, among them some of the country's finest, which while almost entirely secularized are not totally so, and whose traditions are still dedicated to the task of producing the modern equivalent of the kind of Protestant gentlemen who could be favorably compared to the cream of the English squirearchy.

These colleges have maintained their ideals for a longer time than the United States has been in existence. They are proud—and with good reason—of their history and of their accomplishments, and have no desire to become mere additional colleges in the vicinity of a large city. Colleges, after all, are more than aggregates of stone and greensward; each has a unique spirit whose surrender would be a loss. The "name" colleges have fostered ethical and cultural ideals that have played a significant role in the development of American democracy.

Spokesmen for these colleges point out that the most vigorous opponents of educational quotas are equally earnest in their insistence that the United States is a cultural as well as a political democracy, hospitable to diverse cultural traditions. "Cultural pluralism," according to one recent definition, stresses the desirability "of preserving cultural traits, of dignifying practices different from our own, and of creating a feeling of pride in the folkways, mores, customs, and social patterns characteristic of the constituent ethnic groups in the American population." Granting the desirability of cultural pluralism, is there any justification, ask these same spokesmen, for "the public" stepping in and dictating the admissions policy of colleges founded by particular ethnic-religious groups, supported in large measure by members of these groups, and with curricula emphasizing the groups' traditions? Is the nurturing of distinctiveness as a strand in American cultural life only for the Jews, the Slovaks, the Irish—and not for the Anglo-Saxon whose ancestors went to Dartmouth?

This argument is obviously no simple rationalization for prejudice but reflects an honest concern for certain values. What we have here, to some extent, is the conflict between two rights: between the right to distinctiveness within a pluralistic society and the right of equal opportunity, both of which are held intrinsic to American democracy.* But the moral dilemma is rendered less acute (though the emotional poignancy is not) when one remembers that cultural pluralism in a democracy can only be a pluralism of equals, of groups of freely associated, equal individuals—an association based on the will and desire to share common ideals and values. Democracy can hardly mean that, though everyone may go to college, only members of certain groups, by virtue of culturally irrelevant considerations of "race" and national origin, may go to the most distinguished colleges. Privilege is not one variety of cultural pluralism. It is closer to being its antithesis.

Many sacrifices have been made in the name of democracy. Many others surely will be called for. But considering how far along the democratic road the great Eastern private colleges have already gone, there is no cogent reason for believing that the sacrifice of certain residual, if hallowed, practices will mean the sacrifice of these institutions as we now know them. Their identities and their unique worth can certainly survive the letting down of caste barriers—Chicago, for one, has suffered no loss in accepting all qualified applicants. A good university should not find it beyond its powers to produce good Catholic and Jewish as well as Protestant graduates, expressive of its proudest ideals of culture and leadership. If the traditions of a university are viable for a democratic society, it will survive the presence of a hitherto unaccustomed number of Jews or Italians from New York. By what principle can any great American university refuse this challenge?

If discrimination in the colleges is an ugly inconvenience for Jews, discrimination in admission to medical schools is a constantly burning wound. There is probably no Jew in this country who has not seen some friend or relative—qualified, talented, eager to be a physician—frustrated and embittered by a stream of rejection slips from medical schools. Hundreds, and possibly thousands, of Jewish young people who would have made their mark in the medical profession have been forced to seek out other vocations. Here there is no question of special traditions, but rather the systematic exclusion of certain individuals from a profession they are eager to enter and for which they have shown remarkable aptitude. Frank Kingdon's report in 1945 (*American Mer-*

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*Some universities plead the desirability of a "heterogenous" student body in defending the restriction of admissions, especially through regional quotas. Unfortunately, this defense cannot be accepted at its face value until every suggestion of *prejudice* has been effaced. The question of a "balanced" student body is an important one, worthy of being discussed on its own merits. But *first* the colleges must offer some earnest of their good faith by abandoning "quotas" that seem motivated by bias rather than a philosophy of education.

cury, October) that, on the average, three out of every four non-Jewish applicants were accepted for admission to medical school, as against only one out of every thirteen Jews, gives the Jewish community every right to be indignant.

Yet here, too, statistics waver and the problem becomes more complex when one looks at it closely; discrimination turns out to be only one factor in a complex web that threatens to paralyze medical education in this country. This, at least, is the impression received from reading a report prepared by Dr. David Berkowitz for New York State's Temporary Commission on the Need for a State University. "Thousands of earnest students," the report asserts, "will not be accepted by any medical school regardless of their qualifications," not because of discrimination but because of the very limited capacity of the medical colleges. "Although the population of the United States has increased almost 75 per cent since 1905, the medical schools of this country were graduating about the same number of doctors in 1946 as in 1905. The pressure of applicants on the country's seventy-seven accredited medical schools is tremendous. There were in September 1947 the unbelievable number of 73,281 applications on file for 6,233 places in the first-year classes of these institutions." An additional complication is represented by the fact that at least 16 of 71 reporting medical schools limit admissions to residents of their own state, which they have elected as their area of medical responsibility. Moreover, many of the remaining forty-three schools, which in theory are open to all comers, have a limit on non-residents that actually reduces their number to a nominal figure.

Applicants from New York City, therefore, regardless of their background, encounter geographic barriers to medical education. It has been said that such barriers are imposed for the sake of keeping out Jewish applicants from New York City; it is obviously no easy matter to make this charge stick, though it has a *prima facie* probability. It can be argued that imposition of geographic quotas is a means of insuring that certain states have enough doctors for their needs, or, alternatively, of maintaining the national and non-sectional character of certain institutions. Whatever the motive of these arguments, the arguments themselves are not without point.

It should also be observed that the New York City medical colleges give preference to candidates from the metropolitan area. In the fall of 1946, the admissions of these colleges were: 51 per cent from New York City, 15 per cent from upstate, and 34 per cent from outside the state. Of the students enrolled in the five New York City medical schools in the fall of 1946, 30 per cent were Jews. The national figure on Jewish enrolments at that time in all the medical schools of the country was 12.3 per cent.

It is obvious that, in comparison with other ethnic groups, a relatively larger percentage of Jews desire to become doctors. It should also be obvious that they have every right to be doctors, and that, in the light of the present shortage, it would be of general benefit could they satisfy their ambition. In the face of those who prefer to ignore the general welfare in deference to racial or religious bias, an uncompromising battle against discrimination is necessary.

But discrimination is, as we have seen, only part of the problem. So long as the demand for medical education exceeds the supply, rejections will be experienced by both the qualified and unqualified. On January 9, the American Conference of Academic Deans made an unprecedented attack on the medical profession for what Dean Simeon E. Leland of Northwestern University called its "Petrillo and Fishbein economics." He implied that the number of medical students is deliberately limited in order to maintain the high price of medical services. The special committee named by the academic deans to study admissions to medical school reported that the strict rationing of careers in medicine—with its ruthless elimination of three-fourths of the applicants, no matter how qualified—was in flagrant disregard of the country's needs. Medical education has lagged far behind higher education in general, the report asserted. In 1905 there was one medical student to every six college students; in 1950, the ratio is one to 150. Last fall some 25,000 tried to enter medical school; only 6,387 were accepted. The situation in the dental and veterinary schools is substantially the same.

It is clear that the medical profession today needs to be hauled out of its hidebound shell and made to see that there are simply not enough doctors, not enough facilities for training them, and that if it does not act on its own initiative, government inevitably will.

It is not easy, however, to define the desirable limits of intervention of the state and federal governments, should the colleges and medical schools persist in refusing to clean their own house. It may yet happen that the federal government will act in largest part indirectly through grants and subsidies —and the power that goes along with them to influence standards of educational practice. Should some form of national health insurance come into being, the increasing demand for doctors would serve further to breach the dikes of discrimination in the medical schools.

Legislation, too, can play a significant role in the struggle. A federal fair employment law and a Supreme Court decision prohibiting segregation in public education, would be a most significant means of ensuring equality of educational opportunity, especially for Negroes. In New York State, the Fair Educational Practices Law of 1948 has attacked the practice of discrimination frontally. This law made it an unfair educational practice for a post-secondary school "to exclude or limit or otherwise discriminate against any person or persons seeking admission as students . . . because of race, religion, creed, color, or national origin." The only schools excepted by the law are denominational institutions, which may select students as they choose so long as they do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

This law went into effect in September 1948, and it is as yet too early to measure its full effectiveness. Some difficulties are already apparent. For one thing, individuals have been reluctant to come forward with complaints, fearing to be forever branded as troublemakers. Second, while schools may not discriminate against applicants because of race, religion, or nationality, they may give preference to the descendants, friends, and relatives of alumni, and they may establish geographical quotas; these practices provide an easy legal means of evading the intent of the law. Third, discrimination against either an individual or a group has been found to be extremely difficult to prove except in flagrant cases.

In the long run, nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the New York State law will blunt the cutting edge of educational discrimination. Already, as a result of efforts by the present administrator, virtually every non-denominational college and university in New York State has eliminated questions dealing with race, color, or religion from its application blanks. Several colleges have admitted Negro students for the first time, and reports from the City Colleges indicate that the chances of graduates getting into medical schools seem brighter. Both New Jersey and Massachusetts have followed in New York's footsteps in fair educational practices legislation.

While recognizing the role legislation can play as part of an over-all solution to the problem of discrimination in education, we should be mindful of the fact that this is a strong medicine, not to be casually prescribed. There is something about an institution of higher learning that abhors the gross and indiscriminate legislative hand—regardless of whether the legislative interest is in admissions policies or the political opinions of faculty members. Both the colleges and the minorities have much to lose, and the body of our democratic liberties is by no means fortified, if the admissions controversy can be solved only by the passing and enforcement of a law. Is it too much to hope that the American colleges, their consciences perhaps a bit spurred by the precedent of anti-discrimination legislation, might themselves awaken to a consciousness of their democratic responsibility?

HUNGER IS OBSOLETE, IF—

The Unused Weapon to Win the Cold War

JAMES RORTY

THE fact and the fear of hunger have ruled the world as long as human creatures have walked it. Hunger governed the primitive world of the Psalmist, where the sower went forth weeping to the field—weeping because he had snatched the precious seed grain from the mouths of his hungry family. It gnawed at the core of the Roman Empire. During the Middle Ages, England recorded seven major famines; there were seven in France during the 1700's, climaxed by the crop failure that precipitated the Revolution. In China and India throughout history, starvation and pestilence have been endemic.

For ten thousand years—until toward the end of the 18th century—the art of agriculture remained almost static. Then the technological revolution in agriculture began. Yet even during the 19th century Europe experienced three great food crises. Each time the rapidly expanding industrial population of Europe was rescued by the improvement and mechanization of agriculture and by the opening of new grainlands in North America, Argentina, and Australia. Today there are no new grainlands, every year there are twenty million new mouths to feed, and only about a third of the earth's peoples even now get enough to eat. Seneca wrote that a hungry people will not endure reason, will not listen to justice, and will not bend to any prayer for mercy. If hunger is not at the surface of the present war fear, it is in the minds of most of mankind a ruling assumption just beneath it. The policy of nations still proceeds on the assumption that there is not and can never be enough food to go around, and that hunger is the penalty of weakness and defeat, the inevitable lot of the hindmost.

AGAINST this background Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations, convened the United Nations Scientific Conference on Conservation and Utilization of Resources (UNSCCUR) last August at Lake Success. More than five hundred scientists and technologists from forty-four countries answered the call of the UN Economic and Social Council, whose consultants had spent three years preparing the conference. Modest men, they nevertheless carried in their heads and briefcases some of the most critical knowledge and skills of technological civilization.

They had gathered to consider the questions: Must want and war still rule the world, now that the barriers of space and time were down and it was helplessly or hopefully one world? Could the feeding of that world win the race with its breeding?

One might have thought that the world would hang breathless on their answers. But that week a crazed war veteran shot a dozen

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THE recent meeting of the United Nations Scientific Conference on Conservation and Utilization of Resources underlined a new fact in human history that may ultimately be of far greater importance than all the deliberations of the UN's more publicized organs: the perfecting of what is in essence a technological weapon as constructive in its potential as the atom bomb is destructive. Will we have the vision to put a power to work that, in the opinion of the author of this report, can win the cold war and bring peace to mankind? JAMES RORTY, who reports on the UNSCCUR meeting and its revolutionary implications, is the author of many magazine articles and several books, the latest of which was *Tomorrow's Food,* written with N. Philip Norman. His poem "Night-hawks Over Bronxville" recently won first prize from Poetry Awards as the best poem published in an American magazine during 1948. Mr. Rorty was born in Middletown, New York, in 1890, and now lives in Flatbrookville, New Jersey.

people and took all the headlines. The press section, even on the opening day, was almost empty, so that what the scientists and engineers said in answer to those life-and-death questions barely got beyond the walls of the conference chamber.

To this writer, that was the strangest aspect of the whole event.

For the answers of the assembled experts were in general agreement and completely sensational.

In effect, the scientists proclaimed a revolution, stupendous in its implications, in the relation of man to his environment. They said that hunger is obsolete in the modern world. They said that the land and the sea hold resources adequate, if they are fully utilized, to feed the present population of the world and any probable increases. They said that we are much more likely to survive by a worldwide organization of plenty than by any attempt to retreat into autarchic, self-sufficient compartments.

The delegates became eloquent in their efforts to impress on the world the revolutionary implications of what they had to report. Dr. Robert Saulter, Chief of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering of the United States Department of Agriculture, concluded his address by exclaiming: "For the first time in the history of the world, man has within his grasp the tools with which to wipe starvation from the earth. Modern man faces the greatest challenge of all times!"

Sir Herbert Broadley, Deputy General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, was equally explicit: "We believe," said Sir Herbert, "that the books of food supplies and food needs can be balanced by increasing the supply assets, not by reducing the needs liabilities. . . . We are not assembled here with our backs to the wall determined to make a last grim bloody stand in a hopeless cause. We are preparing for a new day, a new D-day, confident in the assurance that victory is possible—nay, sure—if we have the courage, plan intelligently, and use all the resources of the world aright."

Other speakers, such as Colin Clark, Director of the Bureau of Industry and Undersecretary of State of Australia, expressed a more guarded optimism. World population, Dr. Clark said, is increasing at the rate of one per cent a year. But there is good evidence, he added, that the real quantity of farm products could be increased at the rate of one and one half per cent a year. "On the face of it," he concluded, "we have the problem beaten."

How dependable are these promises? Admittedly they are difficult to appraise, because they are conditioned by so many unknown and variable technical factors and qualified by so many political reservations.

If only because of the abstention of the Soviet bloc, no inventory of either exhaustible or renewable resources was possible at UNSCCUR. Largely for the same reason, it was necessary to hold the conference in a political vacuum. The delegates represented only themselves. They had personal freedom but no authority to commit their governments to any concerted program for the conservation and utilization of resources. Moreover, there were flagrant and acknowledged gaps in the agenda of the conference. For obvious political reasons, the section on fuels and energy omitted any discussion of atomic power, destined almost certainly to be a major energy source within a decade or two. There was no section on demography, although inevitably the population problem kept cropping up in both the plenary meetings and the section papers.

What one missed most of all, however, was any serious attempt—beyond a few hasty improvisations at the concluding plenary sessions—to synthesize the various production potentials that were described and discussed at the section meetings.

Our modern science and technology is an indivisible cultural whole. Its true potential for the conquest of hunger and want is some multiple of the separate potentials described by the various UNSCCUR specialists in agriculture, forestry, metals, fuels, minerals. To realize these separate potentials and their probably breath-taking multiple, it is necessary to identify and remove the obstacles—which may be technical, social, or political—in an extraordinarily complex and dynamic process. A few examples will serve to illustrate the point.

In Iran the principal obstacles are a shortage of water, the malaria mosquito, and the feudalism of Iranian society. Airplane spraying of DDT will control malaria at a cost of fifteen to thirty cents per person per year, thereby releasing new resources of manpower to execute Iran's seven-year plan of power dam construction, irrigation, agricultural, and industrial modernization. The feudal bureaucrat is more resistant. If Western capital is used chiefly to bolster Iran's outmoded state apparatus, then the plan will lag and sooner or later the Iranian peasants will welcome the liberation—with subsequent enslavement—offered by Iran's Northern Big Brother.

India, too, hangs in the balance between East and West. There one of the most critical bottlenecks will be broken if the Indian farmers are provided with cheap fertilizers. "Unless we can do this," said Dr. J. N. Ray, deputy director-general of industries and supply for the government of India, "we will be unable to provide the necessary twenty-six hundred calories per day. India has now fallen short of food, and nearly forty-eight million of her 'average men' are not adequately provided with food. Unless we get full international cooperation, the future is rather dark." It is very dark in India both nutritionally and politically. Two nitrate plants like those Du Pont built in Delaware during the war would probably swing the balance to the West. If India had had those plants in 1945, the famine of that year might well have been prevented, in the opinion of some of the best-informed UNSCCUR delegates.

Cheaper fertilizer is the key to both food and freedom in other countries as well: Chile, whose farmers are now paying for a unit of fertilizer three or four times what they can get for their wheat, with the result that crop yields and soil fertility are dropping and political tensions rising; Japan, whose intensive soil-conserving agriculture is now largely dependent on phosphate mined in Idaho and paid for with American dollars; New Zealand and Australia, whose dairy and wheat farmers may reach the end of their Pacific Island supplies of phosphate in a few years.

Before the war, international cartels rationed the production and controlled the price of the three principal plant nutrients—nitrogen, phosphate, and potash. Hugely expanded production of all three and their distribution under Food and Agricultural Organization auspices to break food bottlenecks around the world is one of the most critical requirements of the present world food situation. Only when this and other basic jobs of rationalization are done on a worldwide scale will the optimism expressed by Sir Herbert Broadley and Dr. Robert Saulter begin to take on reality, as both are quite aware.

Essentially, this aspect of the world food problem arises from the fact that the one-hundred-and-fifty-year-old agricultural revolution which continues to make enormous strides in America has barely reached China and India. During the past twenty years, the average per-acre yields of all major crops in this country have increased about fifty per cent, largely owing to the introduction of hardier and more prolific varieties of plants. For example, introduction of the better type of seed now used in this country would alone enable India to increase her annual rice crop by a million tons.

New insecticides, plant growth regulators, weed eradicators, and the precision placement of fertilizers guided by research with radioactive isotopes, have all contributed tremendous gains to American agriculture. Many of these gains can be transmitted without too much delay to the less advanced countries. The same methods that today are enabling our Southeastern farmers to increase their corn yield from thirty to one hundred bushels per acre can be counted on eventually to produce a similar result in other hot and humid areas: for example, Italy, where American hybrid corn has been dramatically successful.

"The technological difficulties are great," said Dr. Saulter, "yet these are probably small in contrast to the complex social, economic, and political questions largely outside the field of agriculture."

IN ESTIMATING potential increases in world food production, FAO and other experts usually take account only of the basic agricultural staples. Yet it is habit more than anything else that makes us look to the land for our food harvests. Actually, our oceans, lakes, and freshwater ponds represent a huge food potential that we have barely begun to exploit.

Over seventy per cent of the surface of the earth is covered with water. The sea, which is the ultimate legatee of land erosion, contains all the minerals required for life and compares favorably with good garden soil in fertility. "Acre for acre," writes Dr. F. N. Woodward, director of the Scottish Seaweed Association, "[the sea] is more productive than the land, and there is no danger of drought or violent temperature fluctuations and relatively little fear of disease."

To produce a calorie of animal protein on land requires the prior production of seven calories of animal feed. Yet we can get that calorie directly from the ocean at half the cost of producing pork—the pig being our most efficient land animal converting carbohydrates into proteins.

Some of UNSCCUR's fisheries experts estimated that the present twenty-million-ton yield of marine fisheries could be increased as much as one hundred per cent—quite possibly in time to help achieve FAO's 1960 target, which requires a forty-six per cent increase of total protein production. True, the marine fisheries of the Northern Hemisphere are showing signs of exhaustion, but the propagation and transplanting of marine fish have proved practicable, and the almost untouched fisheries resources of the Southern Hemisphere await only systematic development under international control.

An equal or greater potential is offered by the extension of fresh-water fish-farming, practiced at its best in China, which has a half million acres of fish ponds. Pond fisheries can be made to yield all the way from one hundred and thirty to four thousand pounds a year per acre. The most valuable fisheries on record are not in the ocean but in the Delta Lakes of Egypt, which produce over twenty thousand metric tons of fish annually. Indian fish ponds yield far more food, acre per acre, than Indian soil. Eliminate the water hyacinth, which is not at all impossible, and the fish ponds of Bengal could add one hundred million pounds per year to their present fish production. China's rice paddies produce one hundred and thirty pounds of fish per acre—ten times that with feeding—and the fish help by eating the rice borer. Fish farming and malaria control can also be teamed, since fish eat the malaria mosquito. They are also efficient converters of municipal sewage; the night soil of Calcutta is disposed of in this way. India and the Philippines each have a million acres of mud-flats and mangrove swamps that could be utilized for fish-farming. Israel, after finding it too costly to wash the saline soil of the Valley of Bethshan, turned to fish-farming its brackish ponds, with the result that parts of Palestine that had been waste land for ages now support substantial settlements.

IN ADDITION to increased land and water harvests of conventional foods, we may expect in the near future a contribution to the world's food supply of wholly new food resources created by the microbiologist and the chemurgist. Of these new foods the most promising at the moment is food yeast.

During World War II the Germans produced about sixteen thousand tons of food yeast a year by processes that used both hydrolyzed cull wood and the sulphite liquor of the wood pulp industry. TVA is now conducting pilot plant research designed to improve the German process of wood hydrolysis and utilize some part of the huge annual waste of American lumbering operations. This waste now amounts to about seventy per cent of the annual cutting. American sulphite mills annually pollute our streams with about half a million tons of mixed sugars capable of producing food yeast for consumption either by domestic animals or by human beings directly.

In recent experiments conducted in India by the British Medical Council, food yeast has successfully replaced meat and milk proteins at a fraction of the cost, providing in addition a full complement of the B vitamins in which the Indian diet is deficient. During World War II our own navy nutritionists stepped up the nutritional value of the navy diet by mixing food yeast into stews, soups, and cereal products, thereby incidentally improving their flavor and acceptability.

Recently microbiologists have developed new yeast containing fifty-five per cent of fat, so that the wood hydrolysis-yeast conversion operation can be conducted with either protein or fat as its end product and with important vitamin and mineral by-products in either case.

The advantage of the forest-to-fat-and-protein cycle from the point of view of the conservationist is that it may greatly increase the economic productivity of tree crops, which are soil conserving and which may be grown without fertilizers on soils and slopes that will not yield agricultural crops.

Even more exciting to the conservationist is a method of producing fat, sugar, and protein that by-passes the land altogether. This process employs as its raw material the enormous unused resource of the fresh- and salt-water algae. Already Stanford University microbiologists are producing edible fat from freshwater algae on a sizable laboratory scale. If this process can be successfully commercialized, as now seems probable, its possibilities are incalculable. Almost any pond can be made to produce many times as much algae carbohydrate per acre as can be grown on land, using the best agricultural technology known. In addition we have the wild algae crops of the ocean; at least forty-five million tons of giant seaweed could be harvested off our Pacific Coast alone.

Yes, the scientists' promises are sound. Hunger is obsolete—if the scientists are given a free hand to develop food resources, everywhere. But against these technical potentialities, what practical steps can be marked up as already realized?

UNSCCUR itself, as was pointed out in the concluding plenary sessions of the conference, was such a practical step. The section meetings of the Conference brought together the most distinguished scientists and engineers of the various professional disciplines concerned with both exhaustible and renewable resources. The plenary sessions heard a number of able attempts to confront the problem of launching a general program for the development of resources on a global scale. When the proceedings of the conference are published, they alone will constitute a technical reference library of inestimable value. On this treasure house the Point Four* missions of our State Department and of the United Nations will undoubtedly draw heavily, each team selecting and utilizing such elements of the available science and technology as promise to break local bottlenecks most quickly and utilize the available natural and human resources most effectively.

All this, however, looks feeble and primitive when the exigencies—and the potentialities—of the existing situation are considered.

Actually, of course, the problem of hunger is beaten only statistically, on paper, by the balancing of real liabilities against potential assets. A psychological and moral and political revolution must be won, or at least well begun, before the technological revolution can achieve its final victory. As yet we have no concerted effort to conquer hunger. Instead, we have the cold war.

At the center of the problem is the issue of human freedom, dramatized at UNSCCUR by the abstention of the Soviet bloc—with possibly significant exceptions

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*Point Four of President Truman's Inaugural Address, now being used as the basis of a broad plan of international aid, envisaged "a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of under-developed areas."

(the Poles and the Czechs sent papers, and the Yugoslavs were there in force).

Our modern food production potential is a product of the century and a half of political freedom enjoyed by the nations and peoples of the West. During the feudal period the seed of science lay dormant in the frozen soil of political and ideological absolutism. Food and freedom expanded together at the end of the 18th century: it is impossible to say which came first. It would seem, too, that food and freedom have contracted together under the neo-feudal regimes of Soviet Russia and her satellites. Certainly it is true that neither science nor technology have flourished on the dark side of the Iron Curtain. At UNSCCUR there were colleagues of the absent Russian geneticists whose laboratories were closed when the charlatan Lysenko took power, and colleagues of the distinguished Russian soil scientists who could have contributed much to the symposium but whose professional if not physical liquidation was even then being consummated.

In the lounges the delegates discussed the chain reaction by which extinction of political freedom leads to extinction of scientific freedom, which leads to scarcity. Russian agriculture and the Russian food supply, they predicted, must soon feel the disastrous effects of these political suppressions and perversions of science.

What is most disastrous, of course, is that it is impossible to induce the governments of the totalitarian states to appreciate the revolutionary implications of modern food-raising techniques, and difficult to inform their peoples. Russia and her satellites have boycotted FAO, World Health Organization, and other UN agencies upon which we must rely to implement our offensive against hunger. Hence today, as at the beginning of the modern era, what stands in the way of human survival is the limitation of that political freedom and freedom of communication without which the magnificent promise of science and technology cannot be fulfilled.

The President's Point Four program, which is an attempt to realize this potentiality, is the logical extension of ECA. And because it represents the most effective kind of constructively democratic counter-thrust to Communist expansion, it is furiously attacked by Russia and her satellites. Moscow's position on Point Four was fully exposed last September when the General Assembly of the United Nations debated the resolution calling for an expanded program of technical aid to under-developed countries, to be conducted under the auspices of the UN.

In these debates Communist spokesmen drew a sharp distinction between Point Four, which they denounced as a hypocritical disguise for the classic "Western imperialism," and technical aid to under-developed countries, which they were obliged, for the record, to support. Actually, of course, the Kremlin and its allies may be expected to sabotage the program consistently, and precisely because it exposes the most flagrant weaknesses of the Communist position. For Moscow is not prepared to export food, or freedom, or the technicians and technical aid that can be the means to both. (Indeed, in countries newly under its control, it has stripped them of resources and machines, and reduced technical facilities and standards.) Nor does it dare to exchange technicians or students with other countries. It can offer only propaganda, fifth columns, and, where its agents take power, censorship, police terror, and planned official looting for Soviet benefit—poor substitutes for the hybrid seed corn, fertilizer plants, DDT, and investment capital for which the more or less revolutionary nationalist governments of the under-developed countries are now clamoring.

Moscow, at least, has no illusions about the implications of Point Four. In the present struggle between the two systems, victory will go to the side that can marshal the largest technological battalions. UNSCCUR proved that the West has them. But how soon will we bring them into action, and how effectively?

So far we are making no serious effort. The President's request for forty-five million dollars to implement his Point Four program is no more than the smallest beginning—and even this modest request was received by Congress with marked coldness. It is clear that we are a long way from being committed to the pursuit of the global plenty which the scientists and technologists tell us is attainable.

Some of our reluctance is doubtless traceable to residual isolationism: the attitude that the rest of the world must "stand on its own feet." Just as fundamental, perhaps, is our failure to understand that the armaments race is not in the long run a practicable means of winning the cold war and assuring our survival. We should be at once more aggressive and more imaginative. As things stand, armaments absorb most of our available resources, and we are obliged to economize on the only program that holds out a real hope of final victory: the global offensive against hunger.

Admittedly, there is no easy escape from the dilemma. The scientists at UNSCCUR saw that clearly enough, and many lounge discussions attempted to envisage what the strategy and tactics of a world offensive against hunger might be. Perhaps, some argued, the solution might lie in a formula that would project a huge expansion of United States and UN technical aid to countries both outside and inside the present sphere of Moscow's control, including Communist China—this in exchange for a bilateral reduction of armaments (including fifth columns) backed up with hardboiled guarantees equivalent to those embodied in the Baruch plan for the control of atomic energy.

It is inconceivable that Moscow would accept such a formula. But its offer and rejection would project the major peace offensive that the West has needed. UNSCCUR has demonstrated the possibilities of such a peace offensive; the UN assembly is its natural sounding board; the Voice of America is an increasingly effective instrument with which to carry it to the emerging colonial peoples. They want food *and* peace *and* freedom, and they have only too much reason to know that these three are indivisible.

Because this country alone commands the resources needed, we hold the initiative. When will we use it?

A RELIGIOUS BRIDGE BETWEEN JEW AND CHRISTIAN

Shall We Recognize Two Covenants?

HANS JOACHIM SCHOEPS

THERE are, today, many weighty reasons for supposing that the Jewish and Christian communities that have traveled side by side through history for almost nineteen hundred years should wish to understand each other. Indeed, there has been no lack of such "interfaith" attempts, but most of them have failed because they were without a proper basis in religious faith itself, because they were not grounded in religious truth. Any genuine dialogue between church and synagogue calls for an honest inquiry into the real basis for an understanding between Judaism and Christianity, as well as the inevitable limitations on such an understanding.

It is quite clear that the attack upon Judaism in the past twenty years was also an attack upon the Christian church, that when the synagogue was assaulted the Jewish element in Christianity was assaulted with it. It is impossible to forget that the founder of Christianity was, in flesh and blood, a Jew, that the first Apostles who brought his teachings to the Gentiles were Jews. The attacks (by, for instance, Alfred Rosenberg) directed against the Old Testament as an essential component of the Christian message point to the ever widening realization that Christianity is closely bound up with Israel. This is as true today as it was two thousand years ago; indeed it is especially true today, since historical destiny is forcing the two faiths into a common front. For Judaism and Christianity have a common enemy, the general godlessness which denies the existence of a transcendental realm. Thus the question of a mutual understanding between the two faiths has become particularly timely.

MY OWN thinking on this subject reached a critical point some years ago when Karl Barth asked me in a letter whether a systematic theology of Judaism must not, in our time—and particularly in our time—culminate in the proof that Jesus Christ had to be crucified, and that, accordingly, a Jew *must* today still accept responsibility for his crucifixion. Lavater had put the same question to Moses Mendelssohn, who answered: "How do I know what just or unjust judgments were pronounced seventeen hundred or eighteen hundred years ago by my ancestors?"; and he added that he could not even accept responsibility for the sentences of the Prussian law courts of his time.

Now I do not believe that this question—impugning Israel's very right to existence in the Christian era—can be answered by such Mendelssohnian evasions. Actually, every Jew today, as in the past, must reject Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. The truth, and with it the possibility of a Jewish-Christian interrelation and understanding, is not served by any veiling of the facts; for we Jews—and this we must frankly state—can in no event accept the idea that the Messiah has already come,

IN MOST of the various attempts to secure interfaith understanding, social, political, and public relations linkages have been sought and one important question is usually slighted: How on *religious* grounds can a religious Christian regard the Jew, and how can a religious Jew regard the Christian, in such a way as to gain mutual respect? This is the question HANS JOACHIM SCHOEPS here tries to answer, endeavoring, while recognizing and honoring distinctivenesses and differences, to throw a theological bridge across the present gulf. Mr. Schoeps is a distinguished German Jewish theologian now teaching at the University of Marburg. He was born in Berlin in 1909 and studied at the universities of Heidelberg, Marburg, Berlin, and Leipzig. He is the author of numerous books and essays in German; this essay is the first of his writings to appear in English. It was translated from the German by Ralph Manheim.

that we are living in an era between the Resurrection and the Second Coming. The Jewish objection to the claim that the Messiah has come must be stated with the same—naive, if you will—clarity as nineteen hundred years ago: a redeemed world would have to look different. We cannot admit that the prophetic promises concerning the character of the "last days" have been fulfilled—either literally or figuratively. We profoundly feel the unredeemed condition of the world.

Martin Buber expresses the Jewish feeling as follows: "For us the redemption of the world is one with the fulfillment of Creation, with the establishment of a unity, no longer marred by anything, no longer suffering contradiction, realized throughout the multiplicity of the world; it is one with the fulfilled kingdom of God. A partial anticipation of world redemption, as for example a redemption of the soul, is something we cannot comprehend, even though, in our mortal hours, we too experience a sense of redemption and being redeemed. We do not see a caesura in history. We know in history no middle, but only an end. The end of the path of God, who does not stop along the way."

THIS absence of any caesura in its history certainly applies to Israel; but this does not mean that it also applies to all the other peoples of the world. We Jews cannot deny that mankind assumes a different aspect before and after Jesus, that at this point a distinct caesura *did* take place. What can this mean from a Jewish point of view?

According to Jewish religious law, non-Jews fall into two classes: idolaters and Noachides. The Noachides are heathens who have taken upon themselves the seven injunctions already known to Noah: the prohibitions of idolatry, blasphemy, unchastity, bloodshed, robbery, eating the flesh of living animals, and the injunction to seek justice. In the Talmud such "sons of Noah" are called also "proselytes of justice"; they enjoy equal rank with the Israelites. Today as in former centuries, it is obvious that the title of Noachide can be accorded to only a relatively small section of mankind — but every true Christian is recognized as a Noachide to whom *shittuf* (the worship of a second divine being) is expressly permitted. Even in periods when the Jews could expect little good of the church, the Jewish tradition went so far as to distinguish sharply between Christian worship and any form of *avoda zara* (idolatry) and to recognize a transformation of the face of mankind through Christianity as a Noachide possibility.

Hence it cannot be a matter of indifference to Jews whether a man is a Christian or a non-Christian. With Franz Rosenzweig, I would even go so far as to declare that perhaps no Gentile can come to God the Father otherwise than through Jesus Christ. In thus recognizing that the revelation of the church of Jesus Christ has its sphere of validity, from which only Israel is excepted by virtue of its direct election by the Father, I do not believe that I offend against Jewish tradition. For even if we go to great lengths in recognizing covenants of God with non-Israelitic mankind, the absolute validity of the revelation of the Torah to Israel remains unimpaired.

According to Jewish tradition of the centuries, Israel was chosen, however undeserving, to be the bearer of God's covenant. The covenant concluded with the patriarch Abraham was sealed on Mount Sinai by the promulgation of the Torah, and confirmed through the mouths of the Prophets. This covenant, concluded with the seed of Abraham and extended to cover the *ger tzedek* (full proselytes) who joined with Israel, by no means excludes the possibility that outside Israel's sacred sphere God may have concluded other covenants beyond the scope of Jewish knowledge and judgment. In any event, the modern Jew need face no fundamental contradiction in regarding the "new covenant" professed by the Christian church as in no way prejudicial to him and his own certitude of salvation. The Christian who, according to his belief, comes to the Father through Jesus Christ—or who, through the church in which Jesus Christ lives, participates by belief in the coming-to-the-Father of Jesus Christ—stands before the same God in whom we Jews believe, the God of Abraham, of

Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of Moses our teacher, to whom Jesus also said "Father."

This fundamental fact, which we can acknowledge at all times, guarantees Judaism's inner bond with Christianity and opens up the possibility of a Jewish-Christian rapprochement. The limit to such an understanding is that we cannot recognize Yeshuah ha-Nozri as the Christ, i.e., as the Messiah for Israel. We are, however, prepared to recognize that, in some way which we do not understand, a Messianic significance for non-Jewish mankind is attached to the figure of this man. We can go this far without transgressing against the absoluteness of the revelation on Mount Sinai (valid only for Israel); we can go this far and still remain wholly and authentically rooted in the revealed truth of Judaism, which neither needs, nor is susceptible to, any completion.

BUT is there also on the Christian side a possibility of recognizing the truth of the Jewish knowledge of God and his covenant, of discovering the work of God not only in the Old Testament—that is, in the past—but also in the post-Biblical synagogue, in Israel up to our own day?

This question must be left to Christian theologians to answer with any finality. It is obvious that a great difficulty stands in the way of an affirmative response: the Christian church would have to abandon a belief which it has held throughout the centuries—its belief in the obduracy of the Jews. But I am inclined to regard this attitude, based on Romans 9-11, as no "church dogma of the dominant group" (as Franz Rosenzweig put it), but rather as a subjective judgment on the part of the Apostle Paul. For the church to revise this judgment, which would imply abandonment by the church of its mission among the Jews, seems more than justified by historical experience. The existence of Israel two thousand years after the birth of Jesus Christ, its undiminished consciousness of being the people of God's covenant, argue that the old covenant has *not* been annulled. The facts of history, it seems to me, argue that the synagogue has preserved a special knowledge of truth, which has held its own throughout the centuries beside the revealed truth of the Christians.

What is proposed here is a view of history which, though reposing undivided truth in God, assumes more than one revelation, and more than one covenant of God with men. And these are reported in Torah and Gospel, in Old and New Testament, if we recognize them as records of God's dealings with mankind and read them without prejudice. The Old Testament signifies for both Jews and Christians an external bond with the eternal God, even though for the Jew these books represent God's word in a profound sense that is inaccessible to the Christian who reads them, and even though for the Christian the New Testament represents, in a sense inaccessible to the Jew, "good tidings" addressed to the world of the Gentiles and attested by the many churches of Christ.

There is no doubt that this conception of the "economy of salvation" is sharply opposed to the historical formula of the Apostle Paul. To the thesis of the annulled "old" and fulfilled "new" covenant, is opposed the fact of the two eternal covenants of Sinai and Golgotha, both absolutely valid, one for Israel and one for Christianity, each relevant to that aspect of God revealed to Israel on Mount Sinai and to the world on Golgotha. For the God who named himself to Moses as "I will be who I will be," is in all the diversity of his revelations and covenants the eternally same God; he is absolute for the Jews as the God who is and will be, just as, by a different form of mediation, he has become God for the Christians. Hence Jews and Christians cannot and must not deviate from the absoluteness of their different testimonies of truth. And consequently, they will go their separate ways through history according to the will of providence, up to that point in the future where the parallels intersect.

The end of the two covenants will come to pass in the days of the Messiah, when "old" and "new" covenant become *one* covenant, when all mankind assembles under a single covenant to worship only *God*. The Messianism of Israel aims at that which is to come, the eschatology of the Gentile church at the return of him who has come. Both elective covenants confront the ebb and flow of the finite world in the shared expectation that the decisive event is still to come—the goal of the ways of God that he travels with mankind in Israel and in the Church.

The church of Jesus Christ has preserved no portrait of its lord and savior. If Jesus were to come again tomorrow, no Christian would know his face. But it might well be that he who is coming at the end of days, he who is awaited by the synagogue as by the church, is one, with one and the same face.

I WAS MY FATHER

JACOB SLOAN

I WAS my father: a bald, full-lipped man
with absent eyes, hoarse throat and mouth of wit,
studied heresy at the cabin hearth,
and bought the *Times* the first day off the ship.
I was my father; fought the kids who mocked
his poor wild pinching of the spitball class,
missed him like a tooth when I awoke
into adolescence, swore, harassed,
to outfather father: wish, work, win
what he had never dared, or lost. O,
but I was not my father, shrugged away
from his: "I know Job is very strong.
But a man can longer live with Psalms."
I was not my father; could not hope to say
to my wife the famous solace: "Why
cry? Who knows whether he who found
it, did not need the lost purse more than I?"

"What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here that thou hast
hewed thee out here a sepulchre . . . a sepulchre on high?" (*Isa.* 22:16).

I am myself—not yet, but shall be
less than I become, more than I do,
equal to my friends, less than my love,
more than my work, less than my poetry.
Making and unmaking myself man,
rabbi and charlatan and the between,
and hide myself and give myself away,
and say less than I think, more than I mean.
I build a house which I may not inhabit,
and sow a vineyard which I may not reap,
and play with children who are not my own,
and read a language I may never speak—
and joke and err and plan to be forgiven.
I am all these I do; like Hamlet, have
offenses more than thoughts; but no sword,
except the word I cast into the river.

THE poet and critic JACOB SLOAN is on the editorial staff of the *American Jewish Year Book*, and last year won the Louis LaMed prize for translation. The poem published here is part of a larger series titled "I Was, I Am."

I KILL A NAZI GAULEITER

Memoir of a Jewish Assassin

DAVID FRANKFURTER

So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee (Deut. 13:5).

OF COURSE a plan like this, standing in the sharpest contradiction to my nature, my education, my general beliefs and religious attitudes, the kind of project that must always be the exception that negates all maxims, could not have developed in a straight line. . . .

But it was my firm conviction that the disgrace of the Jewish people could only be washed away by blood. And gradually an awareness grew within me that it was *I* who should perform this terrible act of vengeance. It may sound pompous and yet for the sake of truth it must be said: I felt myself to be an insignificant weapon in the hand of God. . . .

A Jewish student of philosophy, whom I had met at the kosher pension where I ate lunch, played a critical role in the maturing of my plan. One afternoon we were sitting in a pleasant little café in Bern, with wooden booths where we could talk undisturbed. The conversation, as might have been expected, turned to the terrible situation of the Jews in Germany, and I believe I made some general remark about the need for taking up arms against the ferocious Nazi beast.

At this, my friend pulled a little revolver out of his pocket and said: "See, I've just bought this gun for a few francs from a gunsmith in the Aarbergergasse."

For a moment the revolver lay before me on the table and my fingers itched to grasp this implement so indispensable to my plan. Could it be that simple to procure firearms in this country? Why yes, no license was needed, the name of the purchaser didn't even have to be registered. You could buy a gun as easily as a pack of cigarettes. . . .

And yet I was hesitant and heavy-hearted as I went to the Aarbergergasse. Quite a number of cheap revolvers were on display in the gunshop. They bore no manufacturer's name and had evidently found their way to Switzerland in connection with the Spanish war.

Several times I sauntered past the door of the shop. Once you buy a gun, I said to myself, you must act. The purchase of the gun was a long step forward on the road from conception to deed.

At last I gave myself a jolt and went inside. A woman waited on me. To avoid attracting attention, I spoke Swiss German, which I had meanwhile learned so well that I was often taken for a native. The saleswoman showed me the mechanism of the revolver, a six-shooter; she packed it up and threw in a few rounds of tracer shells. My weapon had cost only ten francs, hardly more than a shirt.

No one in the store had noticed how excited I was. But the moment I stepped out on the street, I myself knew that my destiny was sealed. The pledge was in my coat pocket.

And yet many weeks were to pass before

IN February 1936, DAVID FRANKFURTER, then a student at the University of Bern, killed Wilhelm Gustloff, Nazi Gauleiter of Switzerland. A Swiss court sentenced Mr. Frankfurter to eighteen years imprisonment, but he was released in 1945, after serving nine years of his sentence, and is now living in Israel. He here tells the story of the act that changed the course of his life. The narrative as we publish it has been translated from the German by Ralph Manheim, and is excerpted from a book which Mr. Frankfurter wrote with the assistance of the Israeli journalist Schalom Ben-Chorin, and which has been published in a Hebrew translation in Tel Aviv. Mr. Frankfurter was born in 1909 in Daruvar, in what is now Yugoslavia.

my attack on a representative of the new Amalek, Hitler-Germany. The time was not yet ripe for the pistol shots that were to echo through the whole of Europe. . . .

The news from Germany made it plain that the Nazi poison was eating deeper and deeper. The summer of 1935 brought the Nuremberg laws. By this travesty of justice, anti-Jewish discrimination received the sanction of an official code. The case of the journalist Berthold Jacob, whom Nazi agents had lured back to Germany from Switzerland, showed me that Nazism did not stop at frontiers, but was spinning a web over every country in Europe. My bitterness mounted with every day that passed, but I had not yet found my specific target.

Then in November the name of Wilhelm Gustloff captured my attention. A deputy named Canova had raised certain questions in the Swiss parliament with regard to the activities of the Nazi "Gauleiter" for Switzerland—this was Gustloff.

At the time of the First World War (in which he had not taken part), Gustloff had come to Davos, the famous health resort, to be cured of a lung ailment. A native of Schwerin, in Northern Germany, he had never acquired Swiss citizenship, but for many years had been employed by the Swiss government, preparing weather maps in the Davos meteorological institute.

He had joined the Nazi party in 1923. In the fall of 1934 he entered upon full-time political activity, resigned from his position at the weather station, and became National Socialist Gauleiter for the "Gau" of Switzerland. . . .

Under Gustloff's leadership, Davos became a hotbed of Nazism. On the Kurpromenade, arms flew up in the Hitler salute, Nazi emblems marred the beauty of the lovely resort town, meetings and parades were held continually. Gustaloff compelled all German citizens to take an oath of loyalty to the Fuehrer, and he had ample means of putting pressure on those who opposed his decrees (denunciation in Germany, withdrawal of passport, boycott).

With the benevolent protection of the Swiss deputies Motta and Baumann, Gustloff founded no less than forty-five local Nazi groups, fifty "bases of operations," and twenty-one party headquarters in Switzerland. He had under him a whole army of informers to report on the activities of every German and every Jew. He disposed of unlimited funds and his organization was growing steadily. On Nazi holidays he brought in Gauleiters and other big party officials from Germany for mass meetings, and Nazi youth groups held military maneuvers under his direction in the border zones.

After Gustloff's name was brought up in the parliament, the press was full of his activities. It soon became clear to me that there could be only one target for the weapon that I really wanted to fire at Hitler—this *accessible* target was Wilhelm Gustloff.

My original motives had been to retrieve the sullied honor of the Jews and to create a beacon for the world. To these was now added a third motive: to save democratic Switzerland, which had favored me with its hospitality and brought me away from the Nazis into contact with truly democratic people.

But I was not yet ready to act. One winter day I drove out to the public rifle range at Ostermundingen. The place was deserted. A young employe went into the pits and worked the target for me in return for a small tip. I fired six shots—two of them were bull's-eyes, not bad for a beginner. I held my revolver in a trembling hand. Before me stood the concentric circles on a white disk. But beneath them I could see the detested face, the little mustache and the oily forelock combed down over the right eye, the mask behind which an inhuman brain was hatching out plans of mass murder. I saw before me the hideous caricatures of Jews which appeared week after week in Streicher's *Stürmer* (officially banned yet available in Switzerland) marking minds that were often perfectly innocent with a monstrous travesty of the Jewish face, demonic and ridiculous at once, which could only be hated and despised.

Pull the trigger, fire! said my inner voice, and I fired upon the gigantic imaginary foe behind the target. . . .

I LEFT Berne carrying only a briefcase. But it contained the one thing that I really needed for my journey—the revolver.

What baggage does a man need who has resolved to write "finis" to his own life? Naked we go forth from the womb, and naked we return to the womb of the earth—taking nothing with us but our deeds. And I was determined to take with me into the land of truth a deed whose implications could not be measured. Not for a moment did I ask myself whether I should be able to hold my own before God's judgment seat. My own conscience was my guide. And my conscience proclaimed in a loud voice: This is what you must do!

By way of Zurich my journey led to the clear mountain world of Davos. In the train I had an encounter which would have been entirely irrelevant under normal circumstances. But now it took on meaning. The conductor started a political discussion with me. The subject was of course Nazi Germany. Resolutely and passionately this simple man of the people rejected the violence and injustice of Switzerland's great neighbor country.

Here spoke the true *vox populi,* the voice of the simple man from the mass, and in my present situation it became for me the *vox Dei,* the voice of God, demanding vengeance for the spilled blood of Israel.

Yes, these simple people of Switzerland would understand me, perhaps with less reservation than the majority of my own Jewish brothers, whose feeling had been vitiated by the centuries of exile.

We arrived in Davos about four in the afternoon; the sky was darkening. It was my first sight of the world-famous health resort. I went to the Hotel Metropol-Löwen, a good middle-class establishment, and registered under my own name. I had after all nothing to hide. What I had to do I meant to do openly. Gustloff should not be killed from ambush, he should not fall by the hand of an unknown—no, I meant to confront him openly: Jew against Nazi.

Only as I entered my room and slowly closed the door behind me, to gather my thoughts in solitude, did it occur to me that the Sabbath was beginning. This was the hour of grace, when Princess Sabbath, the bride of Israel, is greeted in all the synagogues, when the angels of peace are invited to the festive board, when the candles flicker, and bread and wine stand in readiness for the blessing.

And in this hour of peace, in this pause in the work of Creation, I was to go out and—commit murder. My weapon fell from my hand.

It was a slow, restless night. Despite several sleeping tablets I found no sleep. Only toward dawn did I doze off for a while. My unalterable resolution pursued me even in my thin half-slumber—but still there was somewhere in my soul a last forlorn hope that I might, in some miraculous way, escape my inexorable fate.

A RADIANT winter day rose over Davos. The mountain world lay before me in its virginal majesty. The winter sun glittered on the snowy summits—the mood that lay over this Sabbath, which I could not but regard as my last, is perhaps most clearly expressed in the prologue in Heaven from Goethe's *Faust:*

Die unbegreiflich hohen Werke
Sind herrlich wie am ersten Tag.
(His sublime, inscrutable works
Are as glorious as on the first day.)

But what had men made of this divine world, which might have been a paradise? The accursed symbols of the Nazis had penetrated even into the peace of this mountain world. On the Kurpromenade, a sign showed the way to the house of the "National Socialist Party Leader, District Switzerland"—*my* way.

The shadows grew longer and the Sabbath departed from the earth. Many hundreds of miles from here my father would be saying the blessing over wine, herbs, and fire, accomplishing the symbolic division between the consecration of the Sabbath and the week of man's work. The division between life—and death.

My last day of grace had passed. Now, now I must act. And still I could not. Still there was something soft and hesitant within me. It is so easy to conceive an idea and so infinitely hard to realize it—when this realization means nothing less than the destruction of another man's life and one's own.

Sunday passed in inactivity. I watched a skating race, and yet how far outside of this merry activity I already stood. What goal did these people pursue? A bright flag. I can still hear the voice of a Hungarian lady, cheering her lover, encouraging him to race faster and faster over the glistening ice, to summon up his last strength—for what? To be first to reach the little flag.

And where was my goal? The sign on the promenade pointed to it, to the home of Wilhelm Gustloff, "National Socialist Party Leader, District Switzerland."

On Monday I took a long walk up to the Jewish sanitorium, the Ethaniya. I saw the director and, as though I had years of life ahead of me, we discussed the possibilities of an interneship when my studies should be completed. I was like a dead man, attempting to return to the land of the living.

How did I fill in the slowly passing hours of this last period of waiting? Mostly with a long, long inner dialogue.

With the clarity of one who knows himself to be on the brink of the grave, and from this vantage point casts his eyes back over history, I saw before me the destiny of Israel, an unfortunate nation. Bleeding from a million wounds, it dragged on its painful mission as the suffering servant of God among the nations. Why had the Jews to suffer so immoderately? . . .

When I awoke on Tuesday morning, after another restless night, it occurred to me that this day is known in the Jewish popular tradition as *"Ki Tov,"* because in speaking of this day the book of Genesis twice used the words *"ki tov"*—that it was good. On this Jewish lucky day, my plan was bound to succeed.

On the afternoon of this Tuesday, February 4, 1936, I sat alone in my hotel room. Before me lay two postcards by which I wished to take my leave of my father, my brothers, and my sisters. I don't remember how long it took me to write these few lines. My hand grew heavy. I had the remote feeling that I should soon be reunited with my beloved mother who had gone before me to that other world of which we know nothing and which yet, in the decisive moments of our lives, rejoices us with an intimation of its presence. I sensed that something more than nothingness awaited us beyond the grave.

"My dearly beloved father: I have always given you much sorrow and worry, and little joy. I cannot go on. Forgive me; it is not hard for me to leave this life, knowing that you will never doubt my boundless love for you and my blessed mother. Be strong and trust in God as you have always done. You have Alfons and Joe, Ruth and Naomi, who will still give you much pleasure. I have lost my faith in myself and mankind. I cannot go on. My last wish is that you say Kaddish for me. I hope soon to be united with my dear mama before God's judgment seat. Be strong, you and the children. May God in his mercy give you and all Israel a better fate. Farewell. Your unhappy son, David."

"My dearly beloved brothers and sisters: For the last time I send you greetings, with a prayer that God in his mercy may keep our dear father and you healthy and strong. You alone shall know what moves me to depart from you and the world. I can no longer bear the sufferings of the Jewish people, they have destroyed my joy in living. May God avenge all the wrong that has been inflicted upon us Jews. I myself hope to be an insignificant tool in His hand. Farewell and forgive me, I could not do otherwise. Even in death, Your faithful brother David."

My head sank down on the table. I barely noticed that the chambermaid had entered and was glancing down, no doubt with some surprise, at the melancholy guest.

In the pocket of my jacket I had a cigarette box, in the bottom of which I had noted the exact "plan of action" (in the Yugoslavian language):

"The sentence must be carried out on Monday 3/2, at 9:30 A.M. First call up and ask if he is home. If he does not come out and cannot be seen, attempt to escape; otherwise, go through with the suicide. One or two shots in the chest. Revolver in right-hand pocket of jacket, not of overcoat, ready to fire. As soon as I am in the room, suddenly pull it out, fire three shots at his head or chest."

But the time had passed for the execution of this plan. I no longer felt it possible to proceed so systematically. What was the use of telephoning? I knew the way, and I knew the flat-roofed, blue house at Kurpark Number 3. Without announcing myself, I must go there and carry out the mission that had been imposed on me by the hardest of all taskmasters: my own conscience.

It was now dark in the room. The last night of my life (as I could not help seeing it then) had fallen. I loaded my revolver. A ghostly calm had come over me. The hour of decision had struck.

WHEN I left my hotel at about half past seven, it was black night. On the Kurpromenade I met two acquaintances from Bern, Frau Kaufmann and her daughter, whose house I had frequented. They invited me to tea. What an irony of fate: to be asked to tea on the way to execute the blood verdict.

Lord, that all this still existed. Prosperous Jewish ladies who had come up here for the air. Carefree people, spending vacation days between the Promenade and five-o'clock tea. People untouched by the events of the time, that made it impossible for me to breathe even here in the purest air of Europe.

I was through with myself and the world. In the silence of my room I had uttered the prayers with which a Jew takes leave of life. Viddui, my confession of sin, and Shema Yisrael, the eternal and immutable invocation of God's oneness, that battle-cry of Israel, with which our martyrs entered the fire, that cardinal creed of Judaism, inscribed in every Jewish heart with the blood of our holy men. And softly I added the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. Was it for my mother or for myself?

But now none of the softness of this hour of leavetaking remained in me. Now my heart was as hard and as cold as the snow that crackled beneath my feet. Like a second I, standing outside myself, I coolly observed every step, every motion that I made in the next half hour.

Now I stood outside the enemy's house. Beside the door there was a sign: Gustloff NSDAP. I rang. A woman called down from the second floor landing and asked me what I wished. I heard my own voice echo in the stairwell: "Is Herr Gustloff at home and can I speak to him?" The woman—in this moment of hyperaesthesia I knew she must be Frau Gustloff—answered in the affirmative. I mounted the stairs. Each step brought me closer to the most terrible moment of my life.

Frau Gustloff showed me in and asked me to wait in her husband's study. I sat in a chair facing Gustloff's desk. In my overcoat pocket my hand convulsively clutched the revolver.

My eyes fell on a large, framed picture of Hitler, with a personal dedication from the Fuehrer to "My dear Gustloff." And under the arch-enemy's picture, Gustloff's "dagger of honor" which as an SS-leader he was entitled to wear. "Blood and Honor" was inscribed upon it, but underneath, in invisible letters, was another motto, the words that the Nazi gangs shouted as they marched through German cities: *"Wenns Judenblut vom Messer spritzt dann gehts nochmal so gut."* ("When Jewish blood spurts from the knife, things will be twice as good.")

Blood and honor. . . so be it. Now I would speak to this representative of the world's biggest gang of murderers in his own language, the only language he understood.

From the corridor I could hear the sound of a man's voice speaking on the telephone. Gustloff seemed to be speaking with one of his accomplices. I heard something about "dirty dogs" or "Jewish swine" who would soon see something.

An uncontrolled rage rose up in me. If I hesitated for so much as a moment, the picture, the dagger on the wall, and the brutal voice on the telephone, mouthing threats and vilification, restored my determination.

I had not long to wait. In the passage by which I had entered scarcely five minutes before, the man appeared: a giant, filling the whole doorway. Goliath. "Here I am!" That was his greeting.

Aside from that, not a word was spoken between us. And yet in that second everything was said that needed to be said. I pulled my hand from my pocket and aimed the revolver at Gustloff. The hammer clicked, a misfire. A shell fell to the ground. With frantic speed—for Gustloff had already grasped the situation and was rushing toward me—I took a step backward and fired again.

And now a shot rang out and the enemy was hit. Then I fired a second, third, and fourth shot into him, a fifth went into the wall. Gustloff staggered and fell, and lay before me in a pool of blood. Goliath, Goliath!

I ran out through another door, hung with heavy portières, and found myself in a dark room. Yet somehow in my lashing haste I found the way out. Frau Gustloff came running into her husband's room, and I can still hear her cries ringing in my ears.

With the smoking revolver in my hand, I ran through the corridor and down the stairs. Alarmed by the shots and the woman's cries for help, people rushed out of neighboring houses. "Make way or I'll fire," I heard myself shouting. I brandished my weapon in the face of everyone who tried to bar my path. I was like a madman. I fled, and yet I had already pronounced judgment on myself.

And then the coolness of the night surrounded me. A few yards away from the house, I blundered into a snowy field where I zig-zagged for a time. All was silent around me. But there was buzzing in my ears, and my heart pounded as though it would burst. I threw myself down and pressed my burning face into the cold snow. Over me the stars glittered. Cold and calm is creation, I thought, immutable is the course of the stars. And yet, hadn't something just happened that transgressed against their primal meaning? I have killed. Yes, I have killed, because the power that stood behind my victim dared to tamper with the fundament of creation. Did not Kant write that the stars above me and the moral law within me form an eternal harmony together? I have not disturbed this harmony but rather restored it by an act that had to be done and now has been done.

And yet my task was not completed. The hardest part of it was still before me. I had still to carry out the sentence against myself. There must be no escape. My act must not be debased by any cowardly evasion. The sentence against Wilhelm Gustloff has been carried out; the sentence against David Frankfurter remains to be executed.

I must have spent about twenty minutes tramping about in the snow, beneath the eternal stars in that fearful night. I still held the revolver in my hand. In that time I lived through my whole life.

Now I lay feverish in the snow and pointed my pistol first to my heart, then to my temple. The scenes of my past ran before my inner eye like a film strip. Childhood and youth, the loving atmosphere of my home, the fierce, arrogant hatred I had encountered in Germany. What a contrast. But this contrast summed up my whole life.

What have you lived for? asked a soft but insistent voice within me—and my answer had been the shots which had just been fired at Kurpark Number 3. I had not lived in vain. I might have failed in many things, but it had not all been in vain.

I don't remember whether I simply couldn't bring myself to pull the trigger or whether I had used up all my cartridges. My memory fails me and the trial records, which would surely supply the answer, are not available.

I picked myself up. The damp snow clung to my clothes. What was I to do now? I had put my gun back in my pocket. The sentence had not been carried out.

Was I to take flight after all? Betray myself and the purity of my deed? No—there was no turning back. If I could not carry out the judgment myself, there was only one thing to do: I must give myself up to the police.

In the house next door to Gustloff's, I saw a light burning. It was Kurpark Number 2. I mounted the steps and rang. A bent old man opened the door. His wife, who was no less aged, stood behind him. I didn't want to frighten the old people and summoned up all my self-control. Forcing a natural tone of voice, I asked if I might use the phone. They led me to the telephone and showed me the phone book. Today it seems surprising to me that in those moments of mortal agitation I found the number of the police station at once. It was about a quarter after eight when I rang the station house. I felt sure that the old people must be scared to death. Should I say in their hearing that Gustloff's murderer was speaking and they should come to pick him up? No, I had acted alone, and now I must suffer alone. No one should be drawn into my trouble. And least of all these perfectly innocent, unsuspecting old people, into whose tranquil home I had been led by chance.

"This is Kurpark Number 2," I heard my own voice speaking into the mouthpiece. "I suppose you know what has happened at Number 3, next door. You can obtain exact information here. Send someone at once." Then I hung up and left the house, to wait for the policemen downstairs.

But impatience drove me on. In extreme agitation I went back down the Kurpromenade by the same way I had come. (I had never expected to pass this way again.) Two detectives who had been sent out after me must have passed me in the night, but we did not recognize one another.

TREMBLING with excitement I rang at the wicket of the police station in the town hall. A young policeman looked out and absently asked me what I wanted. "I suppose you've heard what happened at Kurpark Number 3," I stammered. "I'm the murderer."

As I spoke these words, the cold sweat stood out on my forehead. Puffing steadily, I had finished my cigarette. I had dragged my feet this far, but now they seemed to fail me. All I wanted was to stretch out somewhere and get my breath after the terrible exertions of the past hour. But at this point rest was out of the question.

The reaction of the policeman on duty was completely unexpected. He didn't pounce on me—he didn't handcuff me. He didn't say: "I arrest you in the name of the law," the way they do in novels. Nothing of the sort. He just smiled placatingly. He simply didn't believe me.

It is well known that after almost every crime that attracts any attention a number of people report to the police and confess. A pathological desire for attention impels totally innocent persons to accuse themselves of the most monstrous crimes. The uniformed man behind the desk seemed to take the view that he had to do with a masochist. Accordingly he asked me to prove that I had shot Gustloff. (Actually, at about the same time, a young man had been making himself conspicuous outside of Gustloff's house. He had inquired so persistently into the circumstances of the crime that in the end he had been arrested, but had immediately been released. The police, however, had interpreted his actions as a diversion to detract attention from the real culprit.)

I reached into my coat pocket and laid the revolver on the desk. Now the policeman changed color and recognized that I was speaking in dead earnest. He put the weapon away in his drawer and asked me to identify myself. I handed him my papers, offering the additional explanation that my Yugoslavian pass had been deposited in Bern. I gritted my teeth to preserve my composure while attending to all these formalities, although I sensed that my strength was fast dwindling.

"Do you realize the full meaning of what you've done?" asked the surprised official, who presumably had never heard of a murderer giving himself up to the police with a full confession. "Yes," I said firmly. "And I don't repent of it. What I have done, I have done alone. There is no one behind me. I belong to no political group—but I hate the Nazis because I am a Jew."

For a time I was left unmolested, for the police official realized that my present state made further questioning impossible. Then I was led up the stairs to the large council chamber in the town hall, where I was permitted to sit down. Here I remained for about an hour, without handcuffs and treated with perfect politeness. Then the door opened and an elderly man in a dark suit entered. This was Salomon Prader, president of the kreis (township) of Davos. He was followed by several officials, some of them wearing the uniform of the cantonal police, some in civilian clothes. And with them came Frau Gustloff, who dashed up to me and cried out: "That is the murderer!"

Now that she was standing right in front of me, I was able to get a good look at her. She was a woman of about thirty-seven, tending somewhat to plumpness, neither pretty nor homely. At this moment I was strangely impressed by her power of self-control. Her eyes showed that she had been crying, but there was no sign of the horror she must have lived through in that hour. She laid her hand on my forehead, thrust my head far back (there was something almost sorrowful in her gesture), and said: "You look so kind. You have such good eyes. Why did you do it? Did you know Gustloff personally?"

I could not answer. Something choked me. My words stuck in my throat. Good eyes—she had said. That was a good joke. The German racial sense seemed to have abandoned this "noble Aryan" at the moment of confronting me. She apparently regarded me as a democratic-minded Swiss, who had acted in protest against the rape of his country by the Nazi Gauleiter. And this idea no doubt accounted for the moderation she imposed on herself.

"If you had known him," she continued in a soft voice, "you wouldn't have done it. Why did you do it? Did you have personal reasons?"

Now my power of speech returned. I did not leave my seat. I looked at the dead man's wife and flung the truth straight in her face: "No, not for personal reasons."

"Why did you do it then?" she screamed in mounting agitation.

"Because I am a Jew!" I replied coldly.

Then the dike burst, her self-control was gone. That was more than she could bear. That a Jew had dared to avenge the disgrace of Israel upon her husband, that Gustloff had fallen by a Jewish hand, that was intolerable. She began to scream hysterically: "Scoundrel!" she shouted, and turning to the twenty-odd people in the room she began to lay bare her heart. She accused not only me but the Jews in general of everything that was vile and criminal in the world. "The Jews, the Jews, the Jews!" her voice filled the council chamber. Her voice broke, she worked herself into a boundless rage, strangely contrasting with her previous calm. Finally they had to lead her out.

HERR PRADER remained with me for a few minutes and asked for a brief account of the crime. How often in the next few weeks and months was I to repeat this same story, at bottom so simple and obvious. He was polite and reserved, and indeed none of the officials or policemen present betrayed the slightest brutality or incorrectness. On the contrary. In these little people, I felt a definite sympathy, sometimes concealed, sometimes perfectly open. They all knew that my bullets had struck a *common* enemy.

At about eleven that night Dr. Dedual arrived in Davos. This was the examining magistrate appointed to the case by the state's attorney's office in Chur. Accompanied by a corporal of the criminal police, he had hurried over the snow-covered roads to examine me—for the greatest importance was attached to this case from the outset.

This tall, blond man, with his well-proportioned face, his hard mouth surmounted by a little mustache, now began to fire questions at me with a clear resonant voice. This went on for two hours—until one in the morning. His eyes bored into me as though to illumine the innermost corners of my soul. But throughout the hearing Dr. Dedual was polite and perfectly correct. His duty was to reveal my guilt, but he did not abuse his office to attack me in any way.

Dead tired, I was taken up to the town hall tower, the "Gugi," as it is amiably called in Switzerland; here a tiny, ice-cold cell received me. A bunk with a straw tick, a cracked pitcher, and a battered porcelain basin were its only furnishings. Through the little barred window I could see the stars, the eternal consolers. The walls were scribbled over with all sorts of obscenities and curses (against the police). These were the visiting cards of my predecessors, the thieves and tramps who had been locked up here for the night.

Only those who have been deprived of their freedom, only those who have languished between prison walls, will understand the horror that befell me when the door clanged shut behind me. I was under arrest. I was no longer master of my will. The sufferings of a long imprisonment had begun.

JEWISH ART AND THE FEAR OF THE IMAGE

The Escape from an Age-Old Inhibition

HERBERT HOWARTH

WHEN interpreted by Gentiles, the commandment "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image. . . ." is usually attributed to the Israelites' hatred of the idolatry of neighboring nations, and is construed as "make unto thee no graven image for purposes of worship." But it has been understood by the Jewish people themselves as a prohibition against representation irrespective of its purpose—a kind of general exclusion of delight in art. As a result, in the field of the visual arts Jewish genius suffered a thwarting that was self-imposed, and hence all the more damaging.

In Judaism, no less than in Islam, which imposes a corresponding veto on the image, the strictness of its imposition has varied in various ages. It has depended, to quote Sir Thomas Arnold, "on the influence of the theologians upon the habits and tastes of society at any one particular time." It has equally depended on the surge and ebb of conservative and liberal opinion among theologians. Thus, for example, Rostovtzeff, describing the trend that eventually led to the murals in the synagogues at Dura-Europos in the third century CE, notes: "Some time in the course of the first century AD a group of rabbis tried to substitute a more liberal interpretation of the passage [in the Decalogue], which would permit the adorning of synagogues with pictures illustrating the sacred books of Judaism."

But all in all, the essence of the prohibition was observed in most Jewish communities at most times; and where and when individuals freed themselves of it, they lost touch with their people, worked for aliens, and were left with a rootless art of no real importance. Professor Cecil Roth's delightful *Jewish Contributions to Civilization* names Jewish artists who accepted commissions from other faiths and worked in the fashions of other people, and their number and achievement are not inconsiderable. Yet, when everything has been said, they remain little known and of little significance either for their own people or for the others. For by and large only artists significant for their own people become so for others.

WHAT is the explanation of the Jewish fear of the image, this fear that was strong enough to inhibit Jewish artists for centuries?

Among the modern rationalizations of the commandment and its power, one or two characteristic examples may be quoted. Adolph Lods in *Israel, from its Beginnings to the Middle of the 8th Century* (London, 1932), argues that the early Jewish refusal to make images was due to inherent conservatism. Priests and public chose to remain loyal to the habits of a period when sculpture was unknown. At a later stage in Palestinian history, Lods remarks, images became permissible, provided they were not costly ones. The foreign innovation of images in precious metals was resisted, but simple

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IN ADDITION to scholarship and enthusiasm, HERBERT HOWARTH brings to the study of the long-obscured problem of the relation of the Jewish spirit to pictorial art the perhaps useful personal detachment of a non-Jew. He was born in Blackpool, England, in 1917; after being graduated from Oxford, he lectured at the University in Cairo for several years, and was then given a post at the British Embassy there. Between 1943 and 1945 he was an official with the British administration in Palestine. Since 1946 he has been employed in the London office of the Jewish Agency. Mr. Howarth has published a book of translations, *Images from the Arab World* (1944), and writes poetry. His article "An Evening With Israel's Poets" appeared in the November issue of COMMENTARY.

figures in wood and stone were acceptable.

The fundamental argument here turns on conservatism. It may well be that the conservatism that has been so strong a feature of Jewish life for a long period of history was due to exile and dispersion. Conservatism in habits grew out of the need to preserve identity in widely different places. To cling to old ways became a sign of the national longing and a guarantee of its ultimate fulfillment.

Delitzsch, Benzinger,* and others argued —in the period when climatic and physiological conditions were conceived as the dominant factors in forming national character—that a "defective sense of color" on the part of the Jews accounted for their abstinence from painting and for the commandment against images. This point of view appealed to the great Jewish theorist, Martin Buber. In his *Jüdische Künstler,* which is a relatively early work, published in Berlin in 1903, he argues, with perhaps too much enthusiasm and German abstraction: "The Jew of antiquity was more of an aural than a visual man and felt more in terms of time than of space. . . . The most vivid descriptions in ancient Jewish writing are acoustic in nature."

Dr. Buber did not assume that this alleged deficiency of visual sense was innate, but supposed it to have been induced by geographical and social conditions. First, nomad life was hostile to visual images because visual art is set in static things, and because the nomad's feelings were too bold and his way led too far—"*sein Gefühl war zu wild und der Weg zu weit.*" Second, even in the more settled life led in ancient Palestine, says Buber, the anti-chromatic effects of the strong Syriac sun opposed itself to the impulses of visual art. Harsh light, doubled by reflection from sand and stone, he suggests, deprives objects of their color and reduces them to drab remote outlines: ". . . the few colors appear in glaring, abrupt isolation. All this is under the power of a sun that makes things seem remote, devours roundness, and permits no harmonious modulation of colors. This sun gives one visions, but not sight."

Buber was young when he wrote this, and had not yet lived in Palestine. He reasoned from what he thought to be the character of the Palestine landscape. The refutation of his hypothesis lies in modern Palestinian painting with its striking colors—striking, even though a thousand years of poor agricultural methods, bad administration, and goats have stripped the land of the trees and verdure that may have clothed part of it in Biblical days; striking, even though many Palestinian artists think their canvases not yet bold enough to do justice to the land's profounder colors. So a surrealist painter, Wolf Hildesheimer, pleaded movingly in an article written in 1945, in which he spoke of the unrecorded purples of the mountains and craters between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

And in any case, if the Jewish vision was as decidedly non-figurative as Dr. Buber assumed, why was it necessary to bind it with a stringent rule? You do not need to proscribe that to which your subject is not tempted. It is significant that another theorist and one who, if non-Jewish, was nevertheless fascinated by the Jewish mind, theorized to precisely the opposite conclusion from Dr. Buber's. In his *Origin of Language* (1848) Renan states that there are no psychological terms in Hebrew and that consequently the language takes recourse to physical suggestions when mental states must be presented; and he goes on to label the Semitic peoples *voyants* (seers): ". . . idioms depicting all objects by their sensuous qualities . . . were to be eminently suitable to the violent declamations of the Seers. . . . For the Semites, eloquence is chiefly an animated succession of turns of speech and daring images."

Nevertheless, Dr. Buber's argument continues formidable. We find another German Jewish thinker accepting it and reaffirming it. Thus Hans Kohn in his *Prophets and Peoples* (New York, 1946) writes: "The Jew lives within time. He does not see as clearly as he hears. His senses are less aware of the contours than the inner flowing of the world. . . . Thus to this folk did God become a voice. Again and again sounds the command 'Hear!' When Elijah becomes aware of God he hears only a still small voice. Therefore the Jew never made himself an image of his God. It is the word, the *logos,* which to the Jew is the mediator between the infinite and the individual, and the word carries more of infinity within itself than the sharp form of the frozen image."

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* F. Delitzsch, *Iris, Farbenstudien und Blumenstücke* (Leipzig, 1888) and Immanuel Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie* (Freiburg and Leipzig).

ONE difficulty in considering the nature of the Jewish interdict against images is the absence of material other than that presented by Scripture itself. Some light may be shed on the problem if, with the help of Sir Thomas Arnold's standard summary, *Painting in Islam* (Oxford, 1928), we glance at the analogous ban in Moslem theory and practice.

Among the Arabs the ban led to the blocking of image-painting until the last decades, but also to the development of calligraphic art and the arabesque. The relevant verse in the fifth *sura* of the Koran (one of the legislating *suras*) orders believers to avoid images as "an abomination of Satan's work." And the traditions of the Prophet add vivid and memorable elaborations. Bukhari tells how the Prophet said that painters are those who will be most severely punished by God on the Day of Judgment. They will be bidden to breathe life into the forms they have fashioned yet they will be unable to do so and it will become apparent that they have vainly presumed to usurp the function of the Creator and "to assimilate themselves to God." Abu Hurayrah heard Mohammed say: "Who is more wicked than a man who sets to work to imitate the creative activity of God? Let them try to create a grain of wheat or create an ant." It is also written that angels will not enter a house in which there is a picture or a dog.

During the first generations of Islam, rulers and theologians—for some time one and the same thing—were tolerant. But by the second century of Islam the traditions began to crystallize, and the compilations of laws were final and authoritative by the third century. Then "no further doubt was possible for the faithful as to the illegality of painting and sculpture, and the same condemnation was embodied in the accepted textbooks of Muslim law." Though, just as liberal interpretations intersperse the history of the Jewish ban, so in the case of Islam a legislator like Nawawi could suggest that only living things were protected by the ordinance against image-making, but not inanimate objects such as, he specified, a camel-saddle, of which the artist could paint a picture without imitating God's activity as a creator.

Our major concern is with the origin of the attitude. One theory Sir Thomas Arnold considers particularly plausible is that Jewish converts to Islam encouraged the canonization of the Prophet's remarks against pictorial art. A second possible reason adduced by Arnold is "a reaction against the naturalism and verisimilitude of Hellenic art, which had been manifesting itself in the Nearer East for some time before the rise of Islam." A third, the hatred of idolatry, common to Islam and Judaism, which saw a danger in images because they put their makers in the sacrilegious position of a partner of God.

If the Jewish and Moslem approaches are examined together, the dislike of idolatry stands out as the principal common feature. The philosophical achievement of Judaism had been the removal of God from the visible to the invisible world; the Jews had not quite spiritualized their God into a complex of moral requirements, but at least they had unified him and represented him in a system of similes and metaphors that were attached to earthly things but were not materially palpable. Islam, a force making for the economic unification of the Arabs, was to conquer by a view of God that was equally abstract.

Abstractness—or sheerness—was the feature of the Semitic mind that most impressed T. E. Lawrence, it will be remembered: "Their profound reaction from matter led them to preach bareness, renunciation, poverty; and the atmosphere of this invention stifled the minds of the desert pitilessly." ". . . no human effort, no fecundity in Nature: just the heaven above and the unspotted earth beneath. God was to them not anthropomorphic, not tangible, not moral nor ethical, not concerned with the world or with him, not natural: but the being *achromatos, achrematistos, anaphes,* thus qualified not by divestiture but by investiture, a comprehending Being, the egg of all activity, with nature and matter just a glass reflecting Him." ". . . petty incarnate Semites who attained height and depths beyond our reach, though not beyond our sight. They realized our absolute in their unrestrained capacity for good and evil."

There is, however, another important feature common to the Middle Eastern peoples among whom Judaism and Islam first flourished. Sir Thomas Arnold thinks of it as facilitating the acceptance of, rather than motivating, the ban on images. In his own words: "This theological prohibition found a ready acceptance in minds obsessed by the superstition common in the East, that an image is not something apart from the person represented, but is a kind of double." So very old—and more universal than Sir Thomas thinks—is this anxious identification of an image with its original that one wonders whether it was not the original reason for the religious prohibition on images, anterior even to the horror of idolatry which, based by its very nature on intangibles, presupposes a philosophical sophistication that could have come only at a relatively late date.

WHETHER we put the horror of idolatry or the superstitious motive of image-fear first, both together operated to keep the Orthodox Jew and Moslem hostile to figurative art. The idols, portraits, or statues of other faiths seemed to be inextricably linked with the forbidden pleasures enjoyed by the peoples who practiced these faiths. These pleasures were sometimes attractive to the faithful and threatened to draw them away from righteousness; old Palestine knew the magnetism of the hedonist Gadarenes, the Astarte-lovers, the Greeks. Jewish puritanism was a defense-mechanism against infiltration by these heathen cultures. From the one extreme of ascetic obedience the Semitic mind could, it was felt, too easily rebound to the other extreme of carnality; a little sin, a golden mean of pleasure did not exist for it. On this point too, T. E. Lawrence gives evidence from 20-century experience: "Had the circumstances of their [the Arabs'] lives given them opportunity they would have been sheer sensualists. . . . If forced into civilized life they would have succumbed like any savage race to its diseases . . . and like savages, they would have suffered them exaggeratedly for lack of inoculation."

If the Jews do not altogether resemble the Semites of the Arabian desert in this point, it is because mere opportunity has not been enough to win them over to a life of pleasure. Fearing the extreme of carnality and the sensual vehemence that awaited them there, they had, with the help of the Law, proved themselves capable of resisting opportunity. Only once in a while did a Solomon come along—and afterwards become the subject of infinite apologies to prove that his sensual self-indulgence was unworldly, the mystic's ravished intuition of God. And once the disruption of the Jewish nation scattered it over the world, the consequent stiffening of Jewish conservative impulses, the need to insist on identity, aided the Law; and so did the social conditions that rendered every Jew an object of suspicion and envy to the Gentile majorities around him, so that no Jew dared relax in pleasure, least of all in visible pleasure, lest he attract violence on himself and all his community.

One more parallel of the many that might be adduced between Judaism and Islam: The prophet Mohammed, we are told, hated the bath, the public bath, where one person might be excited by the presence of another, as a plague spot of evil. His hyperaesthesia operated in the field of every sensation, including the sexual, and he recoiled. There was a comparable rabbinical suspicion of the bath in old Palestine, especially in those periods when the influence of the voluptuous Gentiles was the strongest. Although in some aspects the Jewish attitude to sex was sane—it was free, for example, from the monastic emphasis on mortification of the flesh—the Jewish fear of displayed nakedness was considerable. The ultimate effects of this fear on Jewish painting have been curious, but not illogical.

However, even the Moslems have had intermittences of pictorial art—see the staff of Moses, the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, and the raven of Noah as pictured in fresco in the Great Mosque of Cordova in Spain. But the synagogue at Dura-Europos is a more significant exception for Judaism. Jewish historians of the 20th century have again and again pointed to the wall paintings in this synagogue as proof that the Jewish consciousness had liberated itself from the law against the image at least as early as seventeen hundred years ago.

While it is clear from the excavations at Dura that there were murals in the Jewish chapel, it is by no means certain that their presence represents a great victory over the prohibition against images. Rostovtzeff himself writes: "What happened in the synagogues was exactly what happened in the temples of Dura, except that the character of the pictures in the former naturally accorded with the general character of the Jewish religion." He means that there was no distinctive new temper or manner visible in the synagogue work; the only difference from earlier and contemporary Gentile art in that region was the fact that the subject matter was taken from the Old Testament. The images were Jewish in name rather than in form and thought.

With all due deference, and subject to correction, I would suggest that the murals at Dura are to be classed with other visual art done by Jews in forms alien to them: with the illuminations of the medieval Darmstadt Haggadah, which used the methods of the Christian illuminated manuscripts; with the Farhi Manuscripts and their Islamic decoration; with the Gothic dome of the Prague synagogue. The Jewish artists who executed this work had become masters of a craft; but in carrying out that craft they renounced their Jewishness. They adopted the sensibility and temperament of the peoples among whom they worked. It was the beginning of assimilation.

"Show me a Jewish painting," someone may say to you today. You can show him Chagall, expressive of Eastern European Jewry, or a canvas by a modern Palestinian. The picture will reveal a Jewish personality, a Jewish distinctiveness with all that may be odd, reprehensible, beautiful, and sad about it.

But before 1900 you would have found nothing of the sort. True, you can take certain works by Jews or half-Jews of the 19th century and point out signs or reminiscences of Jewish character; you can find paintings of Jews by Rembrandt and pictures of Jewish things by religious painters that sometimes reveal a splendid or profound observation of Jews. But in all these examples the Jewish element will be passive. A Jewish art that can be called active, positive, and of international interest because of national vitality, is the result only of the last half-century.

The 19th century was nevertheless a time of preparation. The emancipation movement that began in Europe with the French Revolution caused the Gentile world to relax some of the measures of exclusion it practiced against Jews. A few decades later Jews began to appear among the leaders of European intellectual movements, and among the celebrities of the arts as well.

The first Jews to arrive in West European art were those who explicitly rejected their Jewishness. Most of them were the children of fathers who had had them baptized, and they lived in Germany, where Jewry was embarking on its most complete, and therefore most conspicuously unsuccessful, experiment in assimilation and self-oblivion. The names are familiar: Felix Mendelssohn in music, Karl Marx in philosophy and economics, and many others. In England at the same date there is Francis Palgrave (originally Cohen), who produced the most popular of all anthologies of English poetry in the *Golden Treasury;* and we also have the Disraelis, the elder a littérateur and the younger a novelist who later turned politician.

If, as is undoubtedly often the case, the mixing of strains produces valuable effects, then it might be argued that a mixture of Jewish with non-Jewish culture should be exceptionally fertile. But in the arts the achievements of assimilating Jews in the 19th century were untypical, unstable, and less fruitful than those that might have been had Jews been emancipated into an independence of their own instead of into *dépaysement*. The achievements of assimilated Jews involved excesses: excess of propriety in Palgrave or of patriotism in Disraeli and James Elroy Flecker; excess of religious fervor and damnation-melancholy in Mahler; excess of German rectitude in the great painter Liebermann.

Liebermann is perhaps the foremost instance of the assimilated 19th-century painter. The poet Richard Dehmel could write satirically of a perfect Junker:

Er ist mir doch zu gottvoll zum Hasse:
Ein so urdeutscher Menschheitstyrann,
Dass nur der Vollblutjüde Liebermann
Ihn malen könnte: so schön voll Rasse.
(He is too godly for me to hate
Such an old-German tyrant of humanity
That only a thoroughbred Jew like Liebermann
Could paint him; so beautiful in his bluebloodedness.)

THE Germany of the Hohenzollerns came to recognize Liebermann, as his long life proceeded, as her most characteristic contemporary painter. On the recent occasion of his centenary Leo Koenig wrote of him in *New Life*: "He belonged to that generation of German Jews who believed in emancipation and assimilation while not denying their origin . . . and Liebermann, the pantheist in art as in religion, had no special interest in Jewish cultural problems."

Liebermann is scarcely less a miracle of assimilation in German painting than is Mendelssohn, who rediscovered the *St. Matthew Passion* and thus led to the revival of Bach, in German music.

In a similar way in Russia, Professor Roth tells us, Isaac Levitan was praised by the *Novoye Vremya,* because "this full-blooded Jew knew, as no other man, how to make us realize and love our plain and homely country scenes." Of course, this is praise, as Professor Roth esteems it. But it involves a loss, too. It points a loss of Jewish in the gain of Russian consciousness. The Jewish soul would have gone undisplayed and less understood than ever if all Jewish painters had followed Liebermann or Levitan.

More widely known today than Liebermann is his contemporary in France, Camille Pissarro. Here again the environment produced almost all, Jewish origin and culture but little. But Pissarro's letters reveal that at certain moments this most bucolic of all French painters saw his own canvases with bewilderment, with an obscure atavistic apprehension of an occult presence in them. "I who made them," he writes to his son, Lucien, "often find them horrible. I understand them only at rare moments, when I have forgotten all about them." He found a "savage" melancholy in his work, and he resented it. To try to fix its character, he said: "Remember that I have the temperament of a peasant." His passion for nature was the recoil of a soul that had been divorced from it. Pissarro did not think much about Jewish things; like Liebermann, he had made himself a pantheist and rationalist.

One element, however, of the Jewish make-up was rarely lost by the most completely assimilated of the people. That was the Messianic element. The belief that amid conflict and the stalking terror of Og, Gog, and Magog, the Messiah shall come to lead the poor and the oppressed into their proper bliss was the greatest support of the popular imagination during many centuries of persecution. It is fundamental to the Marxist social solution, and helps to explain the attraction of Marxism for many Jews who have rejected their religion. This remark is not made derisively. In its social, as apart from its religious intention, the Messianic myth only dramatizes humanity's need and hope.* The hope in which Camille Pissarro lived and brought up his artist sons was likewise revolutionary. His letters are sprinkled with warnings against the "sentimental," the "Christian," even the "Greek." Ideas stamped in such moulds, he says, are the antithesis of those "which belong to you, anarchist and lover of nature, to the Lucien who reserves the great ideal for a better time, when man, having achieved another mode of life, will understand the beautiful differently." (July 8, 1891.)

A PROBLEM of the Jewish artist who ceased to be Jewish was, I have suggested, a tendency to exaggerate certain traits of the Gentile environment. One instance of this is the way in which certain of these assimilated Jewish artists canalized the residual Messianic impulses into caricature. Caricature is by its nature an art of exclusion on the one hand and excess on the other. It eliminates most of those heterogeneous emotions that are associated in the greater forms of art, and focusses intensely on the one or two it retains. It makes its selected statements with piercing exaggeration. It delights and revolts by a logical but grotesque magnification of some one feature that the ordinary eye sees as small amid many compensating or cancelling features.

Since 1900, and especially since 1918, a number of artists of Jewish origin have applied their gifts to caricature with superlative effect. Their Messianic impulses are brought to bear in so far as the aim of caricature is almost always subversive. They begin to destroy, as if still sure that when the world tumbles into ruins mild and irresistible peace will come with the giants.

In an article in COMMENTARY ("The World of Saul Steinberg," October 1947), the poet Heinz Politzer, himself one of the ultimate products of the Central European assimilationist experiment, and one who in mourning the end of his era has also profoundly analyzed it, examined the work of one such artist, the cartoonist and draftsman Saul Steinberg. He does not speak of destruction in it, he sees it this way:

"Steinberg renders the isolation of modern man, his boredom, spleen, and inanity. As comedy followed tragedy on the Attic stage, so Steinberg comes after the great documents of modern isolation: Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Franz Kafka have given birth to this ludicrous postlude. By becoming comedy it becomes palatable to the masses." And he adds, "Like Kafka, Steinberg has no need to insist on his Jewishness as something special. He has identified himself with the temper of the age, just as the progressive elements of our age—those able to smile at their own foibles—have identified themselves with his vision." It should also be remembered, that Pascin—a half-Jewish artist born of a Sephardic father and a Serb-Italian mother, and educated in Bulgaria—was introduced to the world of art through his caricatures in the famous *Simplicissimus*, "torchbearer of liberal thought in Germany."

Lack of inspiration is not the problem of assimilant Jewish painting. Nor lack of vitality. But excessive exaggeration is—that excess which, even when it takes astringent forms, is always liable to degenerate into sentimentalism—that very sentimentalism Pissarro shunned, but which is present even in him in his total surrender to nature; for the nature he looked on as objective reality was seen through longing eyes. Excess can be lovely; excess can be art; but can it be the best of art?

Before turning from assimilationist to independent Jewish painting, I would like to consider the problem of excess in one more set of instances, linked with the ancient fear of the excitement of the bath, the temptations of the nude. The ban on the representation of nakedness even up to this very moment, when the struggle for the image has been practically won, is sustained in many Jewish communities. At the Bezalel School in Jerusalem modeling of the nude is forbidden; nor is it easy to get nude models in some Jewish areas. Yet from a number of modern Jewish painters nudes have received the most sensuous treatment since Rubens.

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* Junius Frey, who died on the guillotine with Danton, was a disciple of the pseudo-Messiah, Jacob Frank.

Pascin is a case in point. "Pascin could paint flesh!" say his biographers. "His nudes are plastic, and they exhale a sensuousness from amid opalescent tints, tones of mother-of-pearl, faded rainbows, the sheen of lilies and the subleties of faded roses." Yet at the same time there is something spectral about his evocation of the young girls that were his favorite models. They are young in order that they may not be quite real. They are not quite real because the severe self-denial of the artist's paternal lineage forbids them. All the more does he long for the flesh, all the more does it become appetizing and apocalyptic to him; but all the more it is unmerited, unobtainable; and when he most possesses it, even wallows in it, Pascin is least sure that he has it. The extremes of luxury and deprivation are present together.

Then again, Modigliani, an Italian Jew who died early from a life of debauchery, and of certain of whose surviving canvases Picasso can say in hushed admiration, "I own a genuine Modigliani"—Modigliani is marked by a provocative sensuality. A sensuality at the opposite end of the scale to the ban on the nude. His art is a statement of protest against centuries of discretion, an individual essay on the theme of the sheerness of the first fall into hedonism. Nostalgia for the flesh was his dominant mood. He extracted it from all things. When he came home drunk to his Montparnasse attic one night and made a lot of noise, his landlady got out of bed and went upstairs to stop him. With drunken good humor he laid her across his knees to spank her—but when he lifted her nightdress his hand stopped in mid-air, and he burst out in spontaneous admiration: *"Que les fesses sont épatantes!*—What marvelous buttocks!" And so he found a new model. To live by the orgiastic cult of flesh and die in its practice—that is one possible destiny for those who lose all of Jewish heritage but its starved passion.

THAT the Gentile world has in the end relaxed its restrictions on the activities of Jews means that there is now an invitation, and a temptation, to Jews to paint. But it does not explain why Jews themselves broke down their long-standing internal prohibition of the pictorial.

Many of the assimilated mentioned above had in their leap away from Judaism gone from one extreme to another—thus some of the Mendelssohns, or, a century later, Max Jacob in France, became ardent Roman Catholics. But their leap at least took them, from the very start, out of the whole sphere of Jewish Law—whose very function was in part separatist.

The more interesting question, though the answer is not completely different, is how it happened that Jews whose families did not renounce their faith came to participate in image-making. If Martin Buber is not wholly helpful on the origins of the law against images, he is intensely helpful on this point. As the exponent to the Western world of the values of Hasidism, he indicates in his *Jüdische Künstler* how the "birth of the new Jewishness" brought "the perception of a unity with God." Pantheistic in trend, Hasidism suggested that the virtues of God, which could be manifested in the perfect saint, could through the latter's influence and the contagion of his presence spread into all persons and all matter. If *all* things participated in the divine, it could be piety to *show* as well as *see* them. That an image possessed some of the character of the object it imaged now became a reason for encouraging its portrayal, to catch its virtues and contribute towards their diffusion.

If a private note may be interposed: when first thinking about the Jewish ban on the image, I was puzzled to remember the portraits of revered rabbis I had seen in very Orthodox houses; but Dr. Buber's explanation of the modifications in the Jewish consciousness produced by Hasidism, and the thought that these modifications would operate the "double" superstition in reverse, made it logical. Everything that belongs to a wonder-rabbi is holy. Vilem Haas, who knew a wonder-rabbi in Eastern Poland in the First World War, told me how disciples and visitors waited in front of his table while he ate, and from time to time he tossed morsels to them, and whoever caught these ate with the conviction that a spark of the miracle was passing into him.

In his *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* Professor Scholem says that the innovating features of Hasidism were "the primitive enthusiasm with which it was expounded and the truly pantheistic exhilaration evoked by the belief that God 'surrounds everything and pervades everything.'" In this new sense of the good as endowing the world with loveliness lay the new sanction within the stream of Jewish life for the active making of pictorial art.

And perhaps there was also a contributory factor in heretical Sabbatianism, which Professor Scholem believes to have persisted more strongly than either Orthodox or rationalist Jewish historians previously allowed; it may have led to the acceptance of reforms that filled in the emptiness left by the breakdown of Messianic hopes; and, by its embrace of the belief that evil must be traversed on the way towards ultimate good, it may have affected its adherents' attitude to matter, worldly rule, and sin.

Thus an inner alteration of horizon, working rather less quickly than apostasy but working more potently, succeeded, towards the last quarter of the 19th century, in enabling growing Jewish children to think of becoming Jewish artists.

There are two Jews whom any art lover in the world would immediately cite, if asked to name prototypes of this process. One is Epstein, the other is Chagall. They are the examples, the earliest in time and most outstanding in quality, of how Jewish artists give their best by being explicitly and predominantly Jewish. The power and dynamic of certain of Epstein's images are conceived, albeit unconsciously, in terms of old Jewish history. Brought up in a wholly "Hebrew" atmosphere, he becomes creative when the memories of childhood, and the collective memories of which they were a continuation, are touched. So it recently happened, for example, that he heard the old Hebrew folksongs of the Yemenite singer Bracha Zefira; and they so stirred these profound reactions that he resolved to model her; and she agreed and has been sitting for him.

Chagall's painting is a Jewish, or more strictly a Yiddish, epic that has caught and recorded the ghetto epos of Eastern Europe just before its destruction.

The European provinces of Russia: Poland, and those Baltic countries which together with some Russian territory contained the so-called "Lithuanian" Jewry, nourished a third of the world's Jewish population, the third whose character was uneven with all the richness of ghetto unevenness. The profuse mingling of beauty and poverty, spiritual imprisonment and spiritual soaring, oppressed helplessness and domestic intensity—this is Chagall's subject matter, which is objectivized in material images and communicated in marvels of color and vital diversity of form. He remembers—in sophisticated Paris he still remembers—how the child's eye saw his father and family and neighbors in the Russian village. People and houses jig in fantastic disorder. The perversion of the proper harmony of society, implicit in Jewish subjugation, is represented in the distorted objects that dazzle the child's vision.

Several Jewish artists have begun to work in Chagall's vein. Even in Palestine today there are one or two of them, like Castel, whose images are formulated in the dizzy Yiddish tradition; just as Palestine, despite its preference for Hebrew, still has one or two great Yiddish poets like Papiernikov. But it is doubtful whether there can now be any long sustaining of this subject and its manner. For the civilization that begot it has been obliterated, and there is hardly any possibility of a re-emergence of the Yiddish community. With its melancholy, its malformations, its incredible touches of beauty, its tenacious achievement, it has perished. Those whom it bred, the painter Chagall and poets like Malkah Locker, will complete their work in its name, but probably the story will end with them. Meanwhile a new chapter is being written in Palestine.

THE KNIFE

A Story

SHOLOM ALEICHEM

Thou shalt not steal!

LISTEN to me, Jewish children, and I'll tell you a story about a little knife; not a make-believe story, but a true one—it actually happened to me. There was nothing in the world I wanted so much as a knife of my own, nothing in the whole world.

The knife lies in my pocket; whenever I please I take it out and cut what I want with it—and let my friends know that I have a knife!

When I began to go to *cheder,* to Yossel Melamed, I did have a knife, that is, almost a knife. I made it myself. I tore a goose feather out of a feather duster, flattened the quill, chopped off the other end, and pretended that it was a knife and that it could cut. . . .

"What kind of feather is that, a plague! What's this dragging around feathers?" cries my father, a sickly man with a yellow, dried-out face, and begins to cough. "All of a sudden feathers he plays with—khe-he-he!"

"What do you care if the child is enjoying himself?" replies my mother, a tiny woman with a silk kerchief on her head. "So long as you eat your heart out? Oh, my enemies! Foo!"

Later, when I had begun to learn Torah and arithmetic, I had what was almost a *real* knife, also my own handiwork. I got hold of a piece of steel from my mother's "crinoline" and set it very cleverly in a chunk of wood. I sharpened the steel on the edge of a pot and as usual cut all my fingers.

"Look, now, look how he got himself all bloody, that son of yours!" cries my father and takes me by the hand so that my bones crack. "A fine lad this is—khe-he-he!"

"Thunder strike me!" says mother. She takes away the knife and throws it into the oven, ignoring my outcries. "Now it's finished. No more. Woe is me!"

But I soon had another little knife, now really and truly a knife; a wooden hilt, paunchy and round as a barrel, with a crooked blade that sprang open and shut. Would you like to know how I got it? I saved up my allowance for food and bought it from Shloymele for seven cents cash, owing him three. And did I love that little knife, did I love it! I would come home from *cheder* half-dead, hungry, and sleepy and beaten up. (I had just then, you understand, begun to study Gemara with "Moti-the-Angel-of-Death," the Gemara teacher: "An ox that kicked a cow"—and as an ox kicks a cow, so I deserved a beating.) The first thing I do is take the little knife out of its hiding-place under the black cupboard (there it lay the whole day, as I didn't dare take it to *cheder,* and at home, you can see for yourself, no one must know about it). Then I pet it and stroke it, cut through a piece of paper, chop a straw in half, and only then do I begin to cut my share of bread into smaller and smaller pieces, spear them with the point of the blade and finally put them into my mouth.

Later, before going to sleep, I cleaned, scoured, and polished the knife and took up the whetstone that I had found in the attic, spat on it and went quietly to work, sharpening the blade, sharpening and sharpening. . . .

My father, wearing a skull cap, sits over the Scriptures, studying and coughing,

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SHOLOM ALEICHEM, the greatest of Yiddish writers, was born in Pereyaslav, Russia, in 1859, and died in 1916 in New York. "The Knife," one of his earlier works, and originally one of a group of stories for children, is here translated from the Yiddish by Eliezer Greenberg and Isaac Rosenfeld.

coughing and studying. Mother is in the kitchen, busying herself with the *chala.* I keep on sharpening, sharpening the little knife. . . .

Suddenly my father starts up, as from sleep. "What's that twittering? Who's working there? What are you doing, you *shaigetz,* you?" He comes up to me, bends over the whetstone, grabs me by the ear and breaks out coughing.

"Ha? Knives? Khe-he-he!" cries my father and he takes away knife and stone. "A grown boy, would it hurt him to study Scripture? Khe-he-he. . . . "

I begin to cry out, my father improves me with a few slaps, and my mother, her sleeves rolled up, rushes in from the kitchen in great alarm.

"Sha, quiet! What's going on here? Why are you hitting him? God be with you! What are you doing to the poor child? Woe is me!"

"Knives? . . . " cries my father, coughing. "A little child you call that? . . . A hulk of a boy! . . . Khe-he-he. . . . It would hurt him to learn Scripture? A boy eight years old! . . . I'll give you knives, you empty head, you. . . . In the middle of everything, knives yet! Khe-he-he! . . . "

Mercy, what has he got against my little knife? What sin has it committed in his eyes? Why is he so angry?

I remember my father as nearly always sick, always pale, green in the face, and always angry, angry at the whole world. He flares up over the least trifle and is ready to run me through. Fortunately, my mother protects me, she delivers me out of his hands.

But my little knife was thrown away, thrown away so far that for eight days on end I looked for it and looked for it, but it was nowhere to be found! I sincerely bemoaned that crooked little knife, that dear, good knife. And how black and bitter I would feel in *cheder* when I reminded myself that I would come home with swollen cheeks, with my ears red and torn from "Moti-the-Angel-of-Death's" hands, because an ox kicked a cow—and have no one to turn to, no one to comfort me. Without my crooked little knife I remained alone, abandoned like an orphan, and no one saw my tears, which I quietly let flow in bed at night. Silently, I cried myself out, wiped my eyes and fell asleep, and in the morning again to *cheder,* again *an ox that kicked a cow,* again "Moti-the-Death-Angel's" blows, again my father's temper, his cough, his curses—not one free moment, not one kind expression, not a smile, not one little smile from anyone.

A YEAR passed, perhaps a year and a half. I had almost begun to forget about my crooked little knife. But it would seem that I was destined from above to suffer all my childhood on account of knives. A new knife was created, to my misfortune, brand new, a dandy, a treasure, I should live so, an extraordinary little knife with two steel blades, sharp as razors, with a white bone handle, a brass hilt with red brass rivets—I tell you, a real beauty of a pocket knife.

And how do I come by this wonderful knife, which is hardly for the likes of me? It's a long story, a sad but beautiful story. Listen to it, but carefully now.

You can imagine what I thought of the shaved-face, the Jewish German who roomed with us, the contractor, Herr Herz Herzenherz. For although he spoke Yiddish, he went around without a hat, without beard and earlocks and, if you'll pardon me, with his long coat cut short less than half way down his back. I ask you, how could I control myself and not burst with laughter when this Jewish *goy* or *goyish* Jew would speak to me, to be sure, in Yiddish, but what a funny Yiddish, full of "ah's."

"Well, my dear *Knabe,* what's the text for this week?"

"Ha-ha-ha!" I began to laugh and hid my face in my hands.

"*Sage, sage, mein liebes Kindchen,* what is the text this week?"

"Ha-ha-ha! Balak! . . . " I burst out laughing and ran away.

But all this was in the beginning, before I got to know him. Later, when I became well acquainted with this German Herr

Herz Herzenherz (he roomed with us a whole year), I loved him so much I no longer cared that he never prayed and that he would eat without first washing his hands. In the beginning I could not understand how he remained alive. How does God tolerate him? How come he doesn't choke to death over his food? What keeps the hair from falling out of his bare head? I had heard Rabbi "Moti-the-Angel-of-Death" say—I heard it from his own mouth—that this Jewish German was nothing less than a *gilgul*: that is, a Jew transformed into a German, who later may yet take on the form of a wolf, a cow, a horse, or even a duck. . . . A duck?

Ha-ha! A fine story! So I would think to myself and I would really feel pity for this German. One thing I could not understand: why my father, who was a God-fearing, pious Jew, always treated him with extreme politeness, and all the other Jews who came into our house showed respect for him. "Peace be with you, Reb Herz Herzenherz; blessed be the guest, Reb Herz Herzenherz; please be seated, Reb Herz Herzenherz!"

Once I even questioned my father. He pushed me away, saying, "Go on, none of your business. What are you getting under my feet for, what plague is this? Would it hurt you to learn Scripture? Khe-he-he!"

Again Scripture? God Almighty! . . . I *too* want to see what's going on, I *too* want to hear what he says.

I steal into the hall and hide in a corner and listen in on them, how they are talking in our house, and how Herr Herz Herzenherz laughs out loud while he smokes his thick black "ciga-a-rs" that revive you with their fragrance. . . . Suddenly, my father appears and lets me have a slap.

"Again you're here? You idler! What will become of you, you *goy*, you? Mercy on me, what will become of you, khe-he-he-he! . . ."

Herr Herz Herzenherz stands up for me. "Let him be. *Bitte*, let him be!"

But it doesn't help. My father drives me out. I take up the Scriptures, but it's no go. Who wants to read? What's to be done? . . . I go from one room to the other until I come to the best room of all, where Herr Herz Herzenherz sleeps. Ah, how bright and airy it is! The lamps are burning, the mirrors sparkling; on the table stands a great silver inkwell with a number of fine pens; little dolls, horses, people, stones, bones, and . . . a little knife. Ah, what a beautiful pocket knife! Imagine, if I only had such a knife! How happy I would be! What I couldn't carve with it! Well, let's try it—is it sharp? . . . Sharp? It splits a hair! It cuts a hair in two! Oh-oh-oh, what a knife! . . .

In a twinkling the little knife is in my hand. I look about me on all sides and try to put it, just for a second, into my pocket. . . . My hand trembles. . . . My heart beats so loudly I can hear it go tick-tick-tick. . . . I hear someone coming, someone's boots creaking. It is he, Herr Herz Herzenherz! Aie—what shall I do? Let the knife remain with me, I'll return it later. Meanwhile, we must go, get out of here, run away, escape! . . .

I can't eat any supper. My mother feels my head. My father casts angry looks at me and sends me off to sleep. . . . Sleep? As if I could shut an eye. I'm a goner! . . . What shall I do with the knife? How do I put it back? . . .

"COME here a minute, my precious," my father summons me the next day. "Did you perhaps see the little knife?"

I was terribly frightened. It seemed to me that he knew, that they all knew. I almost blurted out, "Ha? The knife? Here it is. . . ." Something stuck in my throat, and trembling, I answered:

"Where—what knife?"

"Where—what knife?" my father mimics me. "Where—what knife? The golden knife! Our guest's little knife. Overgrown ox, you *shaigetz*—khe-he-he!"

"Why don't you let the child alone?" breaks in my mother. "Is he a fortune-teller that you pester him with knives, knives, knives? What does he know?"

"Knife, knife! What do you mean he

doesn't know?" cries my father in anger. "The whole morning he hears us yelling knife, knife, knife, knife. We turn the house upside down looking for it, and he asks, 'Where? What knife?' Go, wash yourself, you empty head, you *goy,* khe-he-he!"

I have you to thank, Lord of the Universe, that they did not search me. But what's to be done now? I must hide the knife in a safe place. Where? Aha, in the attic! I pull it out of my pocket and stick it into my boot. . . . I eat and don't know what I'm eating. I begin to choke. . . .

"What's the big hurry, a plague!" says my father.

"I'm in a hurry to go to *cheder,*" I reply, feeling myself turn red as fire.

"A scholar he's become, what do you say to our saint?" he growls, glaring at me. Thank God, I got through the meal and said the blessing.

"Well, my saint, why aren't you going to *cheder?*"

"What are you driving him for?" says my mother. "Let the child sit still a moment."

I'm already in the attic. . . . Far, far under the rafters lies the little white knife. It lies there and says nothing. . . .

"Why are you climbing into attics?" cries my father. "You bum, you Bar Mitzvah boy, you bath-attendant! Khe-he-he-he!"

"I'm looking for something," I reply, nearly fainting in fear.

"Something? What do you mean, 'something'? What kind of thing is this 'something'?"

"A . . . B-Bible . . . a . . . an old Gemara."

"What? A Gemara? In the attic? Oh, you savage, you! Come down already, come down and you'll get yours! You bath-*goy,* you dog-catcher, you good for nothing, khe-he-he!"

But I no longer mind my father's curses half so much as I fear what will happen if they find the knife. Who can tell? What if they decide, today of all days, to climb up into the attic to hang wash or tar the seams? I must get it out of there and find a safer place! . . . I go about trembling. Every glance of my father's eyes tells me that he knows, that he is just on the verge of laying hands on me because of the knife. . . . But I have a place for it, a fine place. Where? Buried in the ground, in a hole by the wall, and covered with straw for a marker. . . . Home from *cheder,* I run right into the yard and slowly take out the knife. I haven't even time to look at it, when I hear my father's racket: "Where are you? Why don't you go say your prayers, you coach-driver's apprentice, you water-carrier, you! Khe-he-he!"

But no matter how much my father abuses me and chases after me, no matter how much the rabbi beats me and murders me, that's nothing against the joy I have when I come home from *cheder* to see my dear, my only true friend—my little knife. But this joy—oh, God!—is full of pain, bitter with dread, with great, great foreboding!

SUMMER is come. The sun sets, the air turns cooler, the smell of fresh grass, frogs are croaking, and patches of cloud fly by, without rain, fly past the moon, as though they want to swallow her up; the white moon hides and comes out again, she soars and soars but stays in one place. My father sits down on the grass in a smock, half-naked, wearing a white prayer shawl. He holds one hand in his bosom and with the other he rakes the ground, meanwhile looking up at the starry sky and coughing. His face against the moon is dead, turned silver. He is sitting right on the spot where the knife lies buried, and he has no idea what's going on under him. Imagine, if he only knew! What would he say? What would I catch?

"Aha," I think to myself. "You threw away my crooked little knife, so now I have a somewhat better one, a nicer one. You're sitting on it and you don't know a thing. Oh, father, father. . . ."

"Why are you staring at me like a tomcat?" my father breaks in on me. "Why are you sitting with your hands folded like a public figure? Can't you find anything better to do with your time? Are you too good to say midnight prayers? May you only not burn, my boy, may a plague only not take you, khe-he-he!"

As he says, may you only *not* burn, may a plague *not* take you, it's a sign that he can't be very angry; moreover, it shows that he's in a good mood. And, indeed, how can one not feel relaxed and at peace on such a pleasant summer night when everyone is drawn and driven out of doors, into the air, the soft, excellent fresh air? Everybody is now outside. Father, mother, the younger children who are picking up little stones and playing in the sand. Herr Herz Herzenherz is also wandering about the yard, without a hat, he is smoking a cigar and singing some German song. He looks at me and laughs. . . . He is laughing at me, I suppose, because of the way my father keeps after me. But I laugh back at all of them. Soon they will all go to sleep, and I will sneak out into the yard (I sleep in the front of the house, on the ground, because of the heat), and then I will have my fill of the little knife.

Every one is asleep. Everywhere silence. Slowly I get up on all fours and quiet as a cat steal out into the yard. The night is still, the air fresh, a pleasure to breathe. Slowly I go up to the spot where the little knife lies buried. I dig it up cautiously and examine it by the light of the moon. It glows, it sparkles, like gold, a jewel. I raise my eyes and see—the moon is looking right down at me, at my knife. What is she staring at? I turn round; she still looks on. I hide the little knife under my shirt—she looks on. She knows what sort of knife this is and where I got it . . . got it? . . . I stole it!

For the first time since the little knife is mine, this dreadful word comes into my mind. Stolen? Then I am a thief! A thief? In the Torah it is written, in the Ten Commandments, in large letters:

Thou Shalt Not Steal!

Thou shalt not steal! And I have stolen! What will they do to me in Hell? Oh, God! They will chop off my hand, the hand that stole. They will beat me with iron rods. They will fry me and broil me on hot frying pans. Forever and ever will I burn. . . . I must return it, I must give back the little knife, I must not have a stolen knife. Tomorrow I put back the knife.

So I say to myself and I place the knife in my bosom—but it burns me, it pains me. No, I must hide it again, bury it in the ground until tomorrow. And the moon looks down on me from above. What is she looking at? The moon sees, she is a witness. . . . I crawl slowly back to the house, to my bed, and lie down to sleep, but I toss from side to side and I can't sleep. . . . At last I fell asleep, at dawn, and I dreamt of the moon, iron rods, knives. . . . I awoke early and said my prayers with heart and soul, swallowed my breakfast, standing on one foot—and march, quick, to *cheder*.

"What's driving you to *cheder?*" shouts my father. "What's the big rush? You'll have time enough for mischief. Better say your prayers right, and don't skip any words. You'll have time yet to run loose, you rascal, you atheist, you pig-eater, you, khe-he-he!"

"WHY so late? Look here a moment." The rabbi reproaches me and points to my friend, "Berele-the-Redhead," who is standing in the corner, his head hanging. "Do you see, you trouble-maker? Be it known to you that from now on his name is no more 'Berel-the-Redhead,' as he was always known. No! Now he has a better name. Now he is called 'Berele-the-Thief!' Ready, children, all together, sing out: 'Berele the Thi-ef! Berele the Thi-ef!' "

The rabbi draws out the words in a singsong and all the pupils cry after him, like a choir: "Berele the Thi-ef! Berele the Thi-ef!"

A chill runs over my body; I am turned to stone. I can't understand. . . .

"Why are you so quiet, *shaigetz?*" cries the rabbi, reviving me with a slap. "Why don't you sing, thick-head? Can't you hear everyone is singing? You sing, too: 'Berele the Thi-ef, Berele the Thi-ef!' "

My hands and feet are trembling, my teeth chattering. But I join the chorus: "Berele the Thi-ef, Berele the Thi-ef!"

"Louder, you *shaigetz!*" cries the rabbi, driving me on. "Louder! Louder!"

And I sing with the chorus, all of us shouting, out of tune:

"Berele the Thi-ef! Berele the Thi-ef!"

"Sh-h-h-h-sha!" suddenly cries the rabbi, banging his hand on the table. "–Quiet. Now we will pass 'judgment.' (In a sing-song): Well, Berele the Thief, come here, my boy, come here, darling, but quicker, a little quicker, if you please. (Sing-song): Now tell me, little boy, what's your name?"

"Berel."

(Sing-song): "Berel what?"

"Berel . . . Berel . . . the . . . thief. . . ."

"That's it, my dear, that's it, little boy, that's a sweet child. (Sing-song): Now Berele, may you only be well and strong (sing-song), please be so kind, my dear Berele, and take off your fine clothes. That's it! Well now, and a little quicker! If you please, well then, step lively–that's it, Bereshi my dear!"

Berel stands naked, as his mother had him. Not a drop of blood in him. He doesn't move a muscle. His eyes are lowered. A dead one.

The rabbi calls up one of the older pupils, all in sing-song:

"Now Big Hershel, will you leave the table? Here, come here to me, step lively, that's it. Now, if you please, tell us the story, from beginning to end, how our Berele became a thief. Listen to him, boys, pay attention!"

Big Hershel begins to tell the story, how Berel got at Reb-Maier-the-Miracle-Maker's coin box into which his mother, before blessing and lighting the candles of a Friday night, would throw a kopek, and sometimes two; how Berel got at the charity box, which was locked; how Berel, with a straw dipped in tar, drew out all the coins, one at a time, from first to last; how his mother, "Zlote-with-the-Hoarse-Voice," became suspicious, opened the box and found there a straw dipped in tar; how "Zlote-with-the-Hoarse-Voice" put the case before the rabbi; how Berel, right after the rabbi had beaten him, confessed that for a whole year, a whole round year, he had been stealing kopeks from the charity box, how he bought himself two cakes and a piece of bread-fruit every Sunday, how . . . and so on and so forth.

"Now, children, sentence him! You know how, this is not the first time. Let everyone pass judgment, what is the punishment for a thief who steals kopeks from a charity box. Little Hershel, you be the first, what does such a thief deserve who steals kopeks with a straw from a charity box?"

The rabbi shuts his eyes, leans his head to one side and lays his right ear on Little Hershel. Little Hershel cries out, in a loud voice:

"A thief who steals kopeks from a box . . . deserves to be beaten till the blood flows."

"Moishel, what does a thief deserve who steals kopeks from a charity box?"

"A thief," answers Moishel in a whine, "a thief who steals kopeks from a coin-box deserves to be stretched out on the ground, two men sitting on his head and two on his feet, while two men beat him with salted rods."

"Topele Tutaritu! What does a thief deserve who steals kopeks from a charity box?"

Kopel Kukariku, a boy who can't pronounce "k" or "th," wipes his nose and sings out his sentence with a squeak:

"A fief, who steals topets from a toin bots, deserves to have all de boys go up to him and try t'ree times into his face: Fief! fief! fief!"

Everybody laughs. The rabbi presses his thumb against his Adam's apple, like a cantor, and calls out in the tone of voice in which one calls to a bridegroom:

"Come forth, bridegroom, Sholem, the son of Nahum, and read the Torah! Now tell us, Shlomenu my dear one, what is your judgment, what does a thief deserve who steals kopeks from a coin box?"

I WANT to answer, but my tongue won't obey me. I am trembling as in a fit, I feel myself choking. A cold sweat covers me from top to toe. My ears are ringing. I no longer see the rabbi, no longer the naked "Berel-the-Thief," no longer my friends; I see only knives, knives without end, white, open knives with many blades, and there, on the door, hangs the moon, she looks at me and smiles, she is human. . . . My head spins and the whole room, the table, the tomes, the boys, the moon that hangs on the door and all the knives go round and round. . . . I feel my legs give way under me. In a moment I will faint. But I hold back with all my strength to keep from falling. . . .

In the evening, when I go home, I feel that my face is on fire, my cheeks are burning and there is a buzzing in my ears. Someone is talking to me but I can't make it out. My father is saying something, he is turning angry and wants to slap me. My mother stands up for me, she spreads her apron like a hen, spreading her wings to keep her chicks from harm. . . . I understand nothing, I care to understand nothing. All I want is that night should come quickly and let me put an end to the knife. . . . What shall I do with it? Confess and return it? Then I'll get what Berel got. Put it back? Suppose they see me? But throw it away and be done, get rid of it! But where can I throw it so it shouldn't be found? On the roof? They'll hear it fall. In the garden? They'll find it. Ah! I know, I have an idea: throw it in the well. A fine idea, so help me, in the well, right here in our own yard! . . . I'm satisfied and I don't care to think any more. I take the little knife and run straight to the well and it seems to me that I'm holding in my hands not a knife but some ugly, crawling thing from which I must free myself at once. Get rid of it! All the same I regret it—such a wonderful little knife! I stand still a moment, thinking, and it's just like I'm holding a living thing in my hand. I feel pity for it: how can I, how can I, it costs me so much effort, a pity for a living thing! . . . I take courage and let it drop from my fingers—splash! . . . A splash, and that's all. No more knife. I stand at the well for awhile, listening—there is no sound. Thank God, rid of it! But my heart pains me: how could I? Such a knife, such a wonderful little knife! . . .

I return to the house and go back to bed and I see that the moon is watching me, and it seems to me that the moon has witnessed everything that I have done, and I hear a voice from afar: "But you are still a thief! Catch him, beat him, he is a thief! A thi-ef!" I lie down to sleep and I dream that I am running, soaring, flying through the air with the little knife, and the moon stares at me and cries: "Catch him, beat him! He is a thief! A thi-ef!"

A long, long sleep. A heavy, troubled dream. Inside me burns a fire. My head buzzes. Everything is red as blood. Burning rods smite my body and I roll in blood. Snakes and serpents writhe about me, their mouths open to swallow me. . . . I hear a blast of a shofar, right in my ear: *Tkieh!*—toot! *Shevorim*—toot, toot! *Trueh*—toot, toot, toot! Some one stands over me, crying aloud in a sing-song, in time with the shofar: "Beat him! Beat him! He is a thi-ef!" And I am crying: "God, take away the moon! Give her back the little knife! What are you doing to poor Berel? He is innocent—it is I who am a thief! A thief! . . ."

That is all I remember.

I OPEN one eye, both eyes. . . . Where am I? What, in bed? What am I doing here? Who is that sitting on a stool beside the bed? Oh! Is that you, mother? Mother! . . . She can't hear me. Mamma! Mamma! Maaammaaa! . . . What's this? It seems to me I am shouting at the top of my voice. . . . Sh! I listen carefully. Is she crying? She is crying, softly. And I also see my father with his sickly yellow face. He is bending over a prayer book, mumbling and coughing, sighing and groaning. . . . It would seem I'm dead. Dead? . . . Suddenly I feel my eyes open wide; they are flooded with light, my head is light, my whole body, light. In one ear I hear a ringing, in the other, *dzshinnnnn!* I sneeze: ka-choo!

"God bless you! May you live long! A sign! *Mazeltov!* Praised be the Lord!"

"A good sneeze! Praise God!"

"God is great! With God's help, he will be well! Blessed is God and blessed is His Name."

"Quick, call Mintze-the-Shochet's wife. She can turn away the Evil Eye!"

"Better call the doctor, the doctor!"

"The doctor! What for? Nonsense! *He* is a doctor! The Almighty is the greatest doctor. Blessed is His Name!"

"Everybody, away, please. It's terribly hot. For God's sake, go away!"

"Ah-ha? Didn't I tell you to pour hot wax on him? Who was right?"

"Praise God! The Holy Name be praised! Oh God, God, God. Blessed is He and blessed is His Name!"

They crowd around me, they look at me. Everybody comes up and feels my head. They cast spells against the Evil Eye, mumble over me, lick my forehead and spit out. They feed me, they pour hot soup down my throat and cram preserves into my mouth. They all flutter about me, guarding me like the apple of their eye, they feed me soups and ducklings like a baby, and never leave me alone for a moment. My mother sits by my side and tells me the whole story over and over again, how they picked me up from the ground half dead, how I lay two weeks in hell fire and did nothing but croak like a frog and babble something about beatings and knives. . . . They counted me, God forbid, for dead . . . and then, suddenly, I sneezed seven times, virtually brought back to life. . . .

"Now we see what a God we have, blessed is He and blessed is His Name," cries my mother with tears in her eyes. "Now we know that when we call to Him He listens to our sinful prayers and our guilty tears. And what tears we shed, your father and I, till God took pity on us! Sinners that we are, we almost, almost lost you, God forbid, may it be on my head. And over whom? On account of what? On account of some boy, a thief, a certain Berel whom the rabbi beat up in *cheder* until he was all bloody, poor thing. When you came home from *cheder* you were as good as dead, may I suffer in your place. He is a terror, a murderer, may God pay him back, Almighty God! . . . No, my child, if God grant us health and with God's will you will get back on your feet again, we'll send you to another teacher, not such a bully, such a murderer as this 'Angel-of-Death,' may his name be erased from memory!"

This news, you can imagine, is most welcome! I throw my arms around my mother and kiss her: "Dear, dear mama!"

My father slowly comes up to me, lays his pale, cold hand on my forehead and says to me softly, without a trace of anger:

"Oh, did you scare us, you rascal, you. Khe-he-he!"

And the Jewish German or the German Jew, Herr Herz Herzenherz, a cigar in his teeth, leans his smooth-shaven chin over my bed, caresses my cheeks, and says in German: *"Gut, gut! Gesund, gesund!"*

A FEW weeks later, when I was back on my feet, my father said to me:

"Well, my boy, now off to *cheder* and get all this nonsense with knives out of your head. It's time you became a man. God willing, three years from now you will be thirteen and Bar Mitzvah, may you live to a hundred and twenty, khe-he-he!"

With such sweet words my father sends me off to *cheder,* to the new teacher, Reb Chaim Tomcat. I had never heard my angry father speak so kindly, and at once I forget his harshness and his curses and his slaps, just as if he had always been kind to me. If I weren't so ashamed, I would throw my arms around him and kiss him. But who ever heard of kissing a father?

My mother gives me a whole apple and two groschen to take along with me, and the German too lets me have a couple of kopeks and a pinch in the cheek and says in his language: *"Hübscher Knabe! Gut, gut!"*

I take the Gemara under my arm, kiss the *mezuza,* and run off to *cheder* like someone new born, with a pure heart, a light heart, with a light, clear head, with new thoughts, with fresh, honest, pious thoughts. The sun looks down and greets me with his warm rays. A breeze steals up to me, under my ear-locks, the birds twitter: "Tif-tif-tif-tif!" I am lifted up and carried along in mid-air, I want to run, leap, dance—Ah, how good it is to live and be honest, not a liar, not a thief!

I press the Gemara tight against my heart and run to *cheder* in joy, and I swear by the Gemara that I will never, never touch what doesn't belong to me, never, never steal, never lie, but always be honest, honest, honest. . . .

SHABBAT IN TEL AVIV

Israel on the Seventh Day

RUTH GRUBER

ISRAEL is at peace. That is the thing a traveler feels most keenly in this year-old war-scarred state. And you feel it best on Shabbat.

On Shabbat a million tired people forget their urgency and purposefulness, and greet each other with the warm slow ancient greeting, *"Shabbat shalom"*—"Peace to you on the Sabbath." The hustling city of Tel Aviv becomes a village again, and the 42nd Street tempo changes to the tempo of the Catskill Mountains on Sunday morning.

All week Tel Aviv shrieks, honks its horns, grinds its brakes dried out by the hot sun, beats its Persian carpets like the rat-tat-tat of a machine gun, blares its radios, backfires its automobiles. Despite the campaign for silence and politeness, called "Operation Quiet" with big signs all over the city saying *"Sheket Bavakasha!"* (Silence Please!), with special civic guards hauling people into court for turning their radios on too loud before seven-thirty in the morning or after eleven at night, Tel Aviv is a noisy, rambunctious city. But it suddenly tones down on Shabbat.

By two o'clock on Friday, the offices are closed; by four most of the shops are closed; and by sundown, the buses have stopped running completely. Traffic slows down to a walk. In a country where there is still no train service to speak of, and all bus traffic halts, the only way to travel is by *sheroot,* which means service—a taxi service that runs along the bus routes—or by special taxi.

All Friday afternoon, you smell the city preparing for its Shabbat. The strong lye-and-soap odor of floors being scrubbed, the rich herb odor of gefilte fish, and the richer odor of fat rendered from rationed chickens, pour out of the open windows of the stucco houses whose walls are peeling and whose sandbagged windows and air-raid entrances and brown pockmarks remind you that a war has just crossed this land.

On Friday afternoon men hurry along the streets carrying bouquets of flowers wrapped in tissue for their wives or girl friends. Sometimes a man carries a bouquet in one hand and a little bundle of sticks in the other, pieces of broken-up boxes which he has bought from a sidewalk vendor for one or two piasters (a piaster is about three cents) to heat the hot-water boiler for his afternoon bath.

Friday afternoon is when Tel Aviv's husbands atone for their guilt; all week they have involuntarily neglected their families, busy with the work of earning enough money to feed them and bringing new immigrants into the land. On Friday afternoon *abba* (papa) comes home from work, takes a shower, scrubs hard, puts on a fresh white shirt, sets the spotlessly clean baby in the spotlessly clean white baby carriage, and takes the baby out for a stroll. On Friday *abba* walks the baby, while *ima* (mama) makes the gefilte fish.

The screaming street noises disappear. The people who have worked late or shopped late—the good housewives do their shopping for Shabbat on Thursday in the marketplace—queue up for the last crowded bus home before sundown. The barefoot newsboys yelling *"Palestine Post," "Haaretz," "Hadoar," "Marif,"* go home. The shoeshine men, most of them Georgian exiles from Russia, with mustaches like Stalin's, pick up their shoeshine boxes; the screaming, honking, barking, hammering, blasting,

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RUTH GRUBER, recently returned from a visit to Israel, here seeks to recapture the flavor of Tel Aviv's Sabbath. Miss Gruber, formerly assistant to Harold L. Ickes in the Department of the Interior, is the author of *I Went to the Soviet Arctic* and *Destination Palestine*. Her new book, *Israel Without Tears,* from which this sketch is largely drawn, is to be published by A. A. Wyn in April. Miss Gruber was born in Brooklyn in 1911 and received her doctorate at the University of Cologne in 1931. She is at present a foreign correspondent for the New York *Herald Tribune*.

grinding noises that are the background music of Tel Aviv, disappear.

Just before the sun sets, ancient bearded men ride through the streets of the city in ancient cars, blowing a trumpet with a long persistent note, to announce the Sabbath. The single-noted purposefulness of the trumpet rises above the traffic noises. The last shopkeeper closes his shop. And as the Sabbath crier, whom the children call "Joshua and his trumpet," drives off, the Orthodox men go to the Great Synagogue or the smaller synagogues and bare rooms and pray. Traffic cops, dressed in khaki with huge white sleeves, detour all traffic away from the Great Synagogue on Allenby Road. Orthodox women light their candles and pray over their covered white bread. The air is full of the sound of young boys' voices reciting the psalms and singing a 16th-century poem written in Gaza comparing the Sabbath to the bride and the people of Israel to the bridegroom. "Oh bridegroom, go and welcome the Sabbath bride," they sing. "Oh, go and welcome the Sabbath Queen."

After services, the people walk home slowly. Tradition says that angels accompany them on their way home, so on their arrival, they sing a special song of welcome to the angels, *"Shalom aleichem, malachei hashalom"*—Peace to you, angels of peace.

Friday night dinner is the most important meal of the week. Even under austerity, everyone eats well—soup, fish, chicken, if possible, fruit compote. And everyone, parodying the traditional blessing, makes the joke that these are things Dov Joseph has given them—he is the Minister of Rationing and Supply.

The children are allowed to stay up an hour longer on Friday night; young girls walk down the quiet darkened streets arm in arm; boys, about to visit their girls, whistle the first four or five notes of some classic: each boy has his own "theme song" by which not only his girl but every neighbor on the block recognizes him, occasionally finishing the bar as an acknowledgment of the greeting.

Up and down the streets, radios play beloved Sabbath melodies, and friends, who have worried all week about meeting the rent and paying the taxes and keeping the children in school, put their burdens aside and go visiting. For Friday night is visiting night in Tel Aviv, just as Saturday night is movie night.

There are no movies open on Friday night, but there are a few cafés where one can eat and dance; there are even some variety shows, and here and there a lecture for which you buy your ticket before Shabbat. But mostly, Friday night is visiting night, and all over Tel Aviv people who love company and good talk, people like Riva and David Horowitz, the country's chief economist, hold open house.

Tel Aviv rises early every day in the week, except Saturday. On Shabbat, people can sleep even until ten. There is no school, no carpet beating, no screeching cars. Shabbat morning breaks quietly and peacefully all over the land.

Saturday is family day, and soon after breakfast the family pours out of the house. Saturday is maid's day off for those who can afford maids, so mama is eager to get away from the housework. Saturday morning is the time to visit the grandparents, if they are here, and *saba* (grandpa) and *sabta* (grandma) have special delicacies for the little children. Saturday morning the Orthodox men go back to the synagogues to pray; about eleven, when the services are over, they emerge to walk about the streets until lunchtime, carrying their prayer shawls in velvet bags with the shield of David embroidered in gold. On Saturday morning the voices of young boys singing in the halls of worship rise high above the quiet streets, and the Lord's injunction that on the seventh day ye shall rest, is observed by custom, the Bible, and by government decree.

In the Talmud, they play with the word Shabbat—they play with the idea that on Shabbat, you must rest and sleep. The good and holy people, of course, will sleep after the Shabbat lunch; the evil ones must sleep too, because when they rest, the whole world can rest. Right after lunch, *ima* gets into a clean washable housecoat, *abba* takes his shirt off, the children lie naked, and the whole family takes its Shabbat nap.

About five, when the hottest part of the day is over, the family gets dressed again, in their best Shabbat clothes, and they walk leisurely to an outdoor café to drink iced coffee or tea and to visit their friends. They have their favorite cafés, and many of the cafés have their own clientele and often their own language. Café Dahlia, next door to the Armon Hotel where many of the journalists stay, is pure Warsaw; other cafés are Berlin or Budapest or Vienna. *Ima* and *abba* drink their coffee with a piece of austerity cake, and there is ice cream for the children.

On Shabbat, the families of new immigrants and old settlers walk at peace in a country where there has been no peace. A twenty-year-old *sabra,* as the native-born youngsters are called, told me one Saturday, as we walked along the beach, "This is the first time in my life that I remember Shabbat being as peaceful as it is now. There was always tension and shooting here. In 1929, we had the Arab disturbances. From '36 to '39, we had the Arab riots. The war began for us September 1, 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland. Last year, we had the war with the Arabs and we fought on Shabbat too. Now at last the tension is over, and the shooting is stopped. For the first time that I can remember, there is peace."

On Shabbat, the beaches of Tel Aviv are packed with bobby-soxers and the quarter-mile waterfront looks like Coney Island on the 4th of July. Thousands of people dart up and down in the sea. Soldiers and sailors and air-force boys walk arm in arm with their girls along the narrow beach, or sit holding hands on the slippery rocks.

A small white and blue flag hanging from the lifeguards' white tower means that swimming is permitted that day; when the tide is rough, a black flag is hung out, and swimming is barred. If there is any danger of someone drowning, the lifeguards, in bright blue bathing shorts, run down the stairs of their watchtowers and launch a *chassika,* an Arab flat-bottomed boat, pointed at both ends and about nine feet long, like a surfboard. The *chassika* is especially suited to Israel's Mediterranean coast; the waves are small, because this is an inland sea, but rough and dangerous. It is popularly believed that the heavy undertow is due to the seasonal flooding of the Nile. With the *chassika,* the lifeguards can pull two or three people out of the sea in about two minutes, and if need be, can start artificial respiration right on the boat itself.

After swimming, the bathers walk up the stairs of the stone seawall and sit in the outdoor cafés like "The Comrades Club" which is also a bathhouse, the "Panorama," or the smart "Pilz," drinking tea or beer or "Mitz Paz," bottled fruit juice, and listening to the bands playing popular American and Hebrew jazz, or Viennese waltzes.

On Shabbat afternoon, they walk along the concrete boardwalk, assaulted by delicious odors of sweet corn and the shouts of the vendors in white aprons, selling drinks and food in little shops that look like the boardwalk stands at Coney Island or Atlantic City. Children buy ice cream cones; sweet corn is pulled out of boiling water by huge pincers; and one man has a Hebrew sign on his showcase proclaiming himself "The Felafel King." *Felafel* is an Arab kind of tortilla, a flat roll filled with a small fried ball of chopped vegetables and herbs, garlic, pepper, with diced tomatoes and cucumbers on top. It is one of the delicacies of the country, and an essential part of a visit to the beach, like the frankfurter and sauerkraut one eats at Coney Island.

Jaffa, the former Arab city which now houses some forty thousand Jewish immigrants and about five thousand Arabs, curves around the beach of Tel Aviv, like a painting of an old medieval stone city. On the other side of Jaffa, there is a long white-sanded beach called "Bat Yam," or "Daughter of the Sea." On Shabbat, Jews from Tel Aviv and from all over the world come to Bat Yam. Whole groups come in trucks from villages and nearby immigrant housing developments. The truck drivers who have brought them shout loudly, "Return—five groschen" (fifteen cents).

On Shabbat everyone gets into the holiday spirit. I saw a little boy of about four run near the feet of one of the drivers and sing out, "I don't have to pay. I'm a little boy. I don't have to pay." The driver put his hands on his large hips, looked down like a jovial giant at the chubby child, and said, "Such a hero. A hero in Israel." He lifted the child up and swung him into the van.

The melting pot of Israel comes to a slow smooth boil on the beaches. People from every part of the world swim, play ball, ride bicycles and even trucks on the broad white sand. Dark-skinned Jews from India, who look like Gandhi or Nehru and speak English with an Oxford accent, play soccer on the sand, while lovely Indian girls in saris watch or play with their babies. There are Jews from Arabia and North Africa and the Orient. There are long-robed Arabs on the beach leading donkeys with saddle-sacks filled with *sabras,* cactus pears, for sale. You hear a Babel of languages, and Hebrew is spoken in every accent, including the Scandinavian. The bathing suits too are styled from everywhere in the world, in all degrees of Oriental dress and Western undress.

One day I saw a naked baby being driven on the handlebars of its father's bicycle, sitting in a cardboard carton which warned in English: "Keep away from Boiler and Heat."

All along the beach, enterprising new immigrants have built pavilions, cabañas, and cafés on the sand. A row of tin corrugated cabañas has a sign in English and Hebrew, "Shower and Cloak Room, ten mills [fifteen cents] for Ladies and Gentlemen." A café in the middle of the white sand announces in the two languages, "Café Noga, cold drinks, five mills for a glass of soda."

Middle-aged or old men and women carry trays filled with powder-covered "Turkish delight" for one piaster and "sum-sum," a nut-and-honey candy, for two piasters. Men walk up and down with wooden boxes shouting "Eskeemo, Eskeemo," and for ten cents you get a good Israeli replica of an Eskimo pie.

Most of the tray trade is carried on by Jews from Bulgaria who have come to Israel almost *en masse* and have made a good name as hard-working thrifty people. An old man, from whom I bought some Turkish delight, a man with the grace and manners of the old world, told me he had come here six months ago.

"It's hard work," he said, "but it's my country. I have three sons; one is an electrician, one is a barber, one is an upholsterer. They all have work." He repeated: "They all have work."

"Do they like it?" I asked.

"Ah yes, it's not easy, but it's our kingdom."

"And you? Are you content?"

He looked around at the crowded beach, nodded, and answered with a Bulgarian proverb: "I cannot complain against God."

It was late one Shabbat afternoon, and I sat on the verandah watching the people walk through the park that runs through the center of Rothschild Boulevard. The sun began to sink into the sea. The sound of children in the synagogue across the street, singing a happy song—"*Artza alinu,*" We are going up to the land—told the story that the quiet of Shabbat was ending. In the synagogue, old men held a glass of wine near candlelight singing the prayer of "Havdalah," as dusk ended the day of rest.

Street lights came on; the fathers wheeled the baby carriages home; suddenly the buses were running again, grinding their ancient brakes, motorcycles whizzed down the street, truckloads of soldiers drove by, red and blue neon lights twinkled among the yellow electric lights of the city.

Thousands of people queued up to go to the movies, blocking traffic on Ben Yehuda Street. Cafés squeezed more chairs together to hold more people. Jazz bands screamed. People laughed. Tel Aviv was its old noisy self again. Tomorrow was a working day, and Tel Aviv would have its Monday blues on Sunday morning.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE WOMAN DOWNSTAIRS

A Memory of Brownsville

ALFRED KAZIN

WHEN I was fourteen, and lived in Brownsville, the drugstore on our corner was bought one day by a strange little man named Solovey, who with his blond wife and two daughters came to live in our tenement, taking over the small dark apartment behind the drugstore on the ground floor.

They were very puzzling; we could not make them out at all. Both the Soloveys had an inaccessible air of culture and "refinement" which to the end made them seem visitors among us. They brought into our house and street the breath of another world, where parents habitually read books, discussed ideas at the table, and displayed a quaint, cold politeness in addressing each other. The Soloveys had traveled; they had lived in Russia, Palestine, France, Italy. They were "professional" people, "enlightened"—she, it was rumored, had even been a physician or scientist, we could never discover which.

There were many mysteries about them; the greatest was why they had come to live in Brownsville. We looked down on them for this, and suspected them. *We* lived in Brownsville because we were too poor to go elsewhere. Brownsville was virtually my parents' first stop after the steerage, and one we were all going to move out of as soon as we could manage it. To leave Brownsville was the sensible ambition of every poor Jewish family. So that to come *deliberately* to our slum neighborhood, when one was a middle-class intellectual and had lived in France and Italy, suggested some moral sickness and apathy, a dangerous perversion of the feelings. We felt in the Soloveys' move a contempt for all the proper conventions.

Of course the Soloveys were extremely poor—how else would they have thought of moving in among us? Their two drab little girls, who bore the pretty Hebrew names of Avivah and Shushannah, went about looking so ill-nourished that my mother was indignant, and vowed to abduct them from their strange parents for an afternoon and feed them up thoroughly. Mrs. Solovey was herself so abnormally thin, shy, and usually distracted, that she seemed to float away from us when she passed through the hall. There was no doubt in our minds that the Soloveys had come to Brownsville at the end of their road. But what could they hope to gain from us? If they had ever sought to recoup their fortunes in a Brownsville drugstore they were soon disenchanted. The neighborhood women bought such drugs as they had to when illness came. But they hardly went in for luxuries, and they had a hearty, familiar way of expecting credit, as their natural

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right from a neighbor and fellow-Jew, that invariably made Mr. Solovey furious. Yet this was only for the principle of the thing; he showed no interest in making money. He seemed to despise his profession, and the store soon became so clogged up with dust and camphor-smelling paper wardrobes and display placards indignantly left with him by salesmen of beauty preparations which he refused to stock, that people found it unpleasant to go in. We thought him cynical and arrogant. Although he understood Yiddish well enough when someone addressed him in it, he seemed to dislike it, and only frowned, curtly nodding his head to show that he had understood. The Soloveys talked Russian or Hebrew to each other, and although we were all impressed when we heard them going on this way between themselves, we also disliked them for it. Not to use our familiar neighborhood speech, not even the English expected of the "educated," meant that they wanted us not to understand them.

Mr. Solovey was always abrupt and ill-tempered, and when he spoke at all, it was to throw a few words out from under his walrus mustache with an air of bitter dislike for us all. His whole manner as he stood behind his counter seemed to say: "I am here because I am here, and I may talk to you if I have to. Don't expect me to enjoy it!" His business declined steadily. People were a little afraid of him, for he would look through a prescription with such surly impatience that rumors spread that he was a careless and inefficient pharmacist, and probably unsafe to use. If he minded, he never showed it. There was always a half-open book on the counter, usually a Russian novel or a work of philosophy, and he spent most of his time reading. He would sit in a greasy old wicker armchair beside the telephone booth, smoking Murads in a brown-stained celluloid holder and muttering to himself as he read. He took as little trouble to keep himself clean as he did his store, and his long drooping mustache and alpaca coat were always dusty with cigarette ash. It looked as if he hated to be roused from his reading even to make a sale, for the slightest complaint sent him into a rage. "I'll never come back to you, Mr. Solovey!" someone would threaten. "Thanks be to God!" he would roar back. "Thanks God! Thanks God! It will be a great pleasure not to see you!"

"A crazy one," the neighborhood women muttered to each other. "A real mad one. Mad to the point of death."

The Soloveys had chosen to live in Brownsville when they could have gone elsewhere, and this made them mysterious. From some unfathomable act of will, they had chosen us. Yet for me they were beyond all our endless gossip and speculation about them, our ignorance of their circumstances, our wonder at their fatalistic poverty. They fascinated me simply because of their contrast with ourselves. There was something about the Soloveys' open marital relation for which I could find no parallel, no clue, in the lives of our own parents. Whenever I saw the strange couple together, I felt that they were still lovers. Our parents, whatever affection might offhandedly be expressed between them, always had the look of being committed to something deeper, more sober, than *mere* love. Their marriages were neither happy nor unhappy; they were arrangements. However they had met, whatever they still thought of each other, "love" was something that belonged to their past, never to the present. To them marriage was an institution, entered into out of immigrant loneliness, a need for companionship with one's own, which mechanically resulted in the "family." The family was a whole greater than all the parts that made it up, yet intelligible only in their solidarity. I am perfectly sure that in my parents' minds love was something exotic and not wholly legitimate, reserved for "educated" people like their native-born children, who were the sole end of their existence. My father and mother worked in a rage to put us above their level; they had married to make *us* possible. We were the only conceivable end to all their striving; we were their America.

So far as I knew, love was not an element admissible in my parents' experience. Any open talk of it between themselves would have seemed ridiculous. It would have suggested a self-indulgence, a preposterous attention to one's own feelings, possible only to those who were free enough to choose. They were not so free. They were awed by their own children as, in a different manner, they were awed by their own imagined unworthiness, and looked on themselves only as instruments toward the ideal future that would be lived by their children. As poor immigrants in Brownsville, painfully conscious of the difference between them and the "successes"—oh, those "successes" of whom I was always hearing so much and whom we admired despite all our socialism!—everything in their lives combined in some unconscious and self-derogatory order to make them look down on love as something *they* had no time for. Of course, there was a deep envy and resentment in this, and when on rare occasions my parents did discuss the unheard-of collapse of someone's marriage, I noticed that their talk had a hard and severely moral aura around it, as if those who gave themselves up to love must inevitably come to grief. Love, they might have said, was not *serious.* Life was a battle for security and advancement; it had no place, as we had no time, for whims. The problem of life, as it was burned into me as a child not only in my family but also in the street, in our talk after school, in our games, was *getting ahead.* By this we meant not becoming rich (though that would have been very nice; it was simply inconceivable) but mounting a foothold, "making sure." The precipice that led down to joblessness, eviction, hunger, and therefore moral self-destruction, was always before us.

Love, in fact, was something for the movies, which my parents enjoyed, but a little ashamedly. They were the land of the impossible. On those few occasions when my mother, a fanatically industrious dressmaker who kept a little shop in our home, allowed herself a visit to the *Supreme,* or the *Palace,* or the *Premier,* she would return, her eyes gleaming with wonder and some distrust at the strangeness of it all, to report on erotic fanatics who were, thank God, like no one we knew. What heedlessness! What unholy daring! What riches! To my mother riches alone were the gateway to romance, for only those who had money enough could afford the freedom, and the crazy boldness, to give themselves up to love.

THE Soloveys were not rich—they were as poor as we, even poorer. They were lost people, strange and bereft people. They had floated into Brownsville like wreckage off the ship of foreignness and "culture" and the great world outside. Yet there was a visible tie between them, a deep consciousness of each other, that excited me, for it seemed illicit. This was all the more remarkable because, though lovers, they were so obviously unhappy lovers. Had they merely doted on each other, they would have seemed curious but infantile. But they seemed to hate each other, and could often be heard quarreling in their apartment, which, since it was on the ground floor, sent every sound out into the street. These quarrels were not like the ones we heard at home. There were no imprecations, no screams, no theatrical sobs. In our homes family quarrels were awful but not serious. "You're killing me! You're putting me into an early grave! May you be plunged ten fathoms into the ground!" Such bitter accusations were heard all the time, but did not mean very much. Yiddish is one of those tongues in which one breaks all the windows to let a little air into the house.

But in the Soloveys' quarrels there was something worse than anger; it was hopelessness. We felt in them such despair, such a direct confrontation of each other without illusions, that they puzzled us by not sharing their feelings with their children. They alone, the gruff ne'er-do-well husband and the elusive sick wife, were the family. The children did not seem to count at all; the lovers, though their love had been spent, still lived only for each other. And it was this that made them so strange, stranger than Mr. Solovey's books or Mrs. Solovey's vaguely shocking blondness, stranger than the unfathomable despair that had brought them to us. In this severe dependence on each other for their emotional life there was a defiance of the family principle, of us, of their own poverty and inefficiency, that made our values seem crude and provincial. It was only in novels and movies that people abandoned the world for love, gave themselves up to it—gladly. Yet there was nothing melodramatic in the conduct of the Soloveys, nothing we could easily describe and condemn. It was merely that they were sufficient to each other; in their disappointment, as in their love, they were always alone. They left us out, they left Brownsville out; we were nothing to them. *Our* life was compounded of our mutual resemblance and need, and the great things that went into it

—the Sabbath, the holidays, the dark love between parents and their children, the synagogue, the trade union, the fight "to get ahead," our self-enclosed Jewishness—made a common theme on which any family in Brownsville could play its independent variations without ever departing from fundamentals. But in the love despair of the Soloveys something seemed to say that all our interests were shallow, that we looked at life too narrowly, and that in any event we did not count. Their loneliness went deeper than our solidarity.

Morally, they were outlaws in Brownsville, and this attracted me to them. For in my own way I, too, was seeking to escape Brownsville, or at least to defy it. But I did not know where or how to begin. I knew only that I could dream all day long while pretending to be in the "real" world, and that my mind was full of visions that were as intimate a part of my being as loneliness. I had no conscious desire to seek a way out. A sense of isolation was so automatic with me that it led, without any effort on my part, to a flight into books that had a more immediate meaning than the life around me. I felt that I was alone, that there were things I had to endure out of loyalty but could never accept, and that whenever I liked, I could in my mind swim out from the Brownsville shore to a calm and sunlit sea where imaginary friends came up from the deep. Every book I read re-stocked my mind with a fresh set of helpful characters whose great virtue was that they came out of backgrounds dissimilar to mine. They came into my life proud and compassionate, recognizing me by a secret sign, whispering through subterranean channels of sympathy: "Old boy! What have they done to you!" From long practice, I learned so well to adapt myself to them that I could not always tell where my personality left me and where theirs came in to reinforce me. My gift for impersonating characters in the books I read was such that as each fresh excitement faded, I felt myself being flung down from great peaks of longing. I was not always sure which character I was playing, there were so many in my head at once; or how I could accommodate one to the other; but after an afternoon's reading in the public library, I could walk past the pushcarts in the open market on Belmont Avenue, where the old women in their shawls hoarsely cried their wares: "Housewives! Beautiful Good Housewives! Storm Us! Tear Us Apart! How Can You Resist Such Bargains? Housewives!"—playing out the story of Richard II, or the poignant crippled hero of *Of Human Bondage,* a book I had read to tatters in my amazement that Mr. W. Somerset Maugham knew me so well. In that twenty minutes' walk from the library to my home I sometimes played out the life cycles of at least five imaginary characters. They did not stay very long in my mind, for I discovered new books every day; somewhere I felt them to be unreal, acquisitions bought at the price of reality; but while they lived, they gave me a kind of happiness that reverberated in my mind long after I had reached our street and had gone up the worn stone steps of our tenement.

THE Soloveys came into my life as an unexpected visitation of the *great friends.* Everything which made them queer in the eyes of the neighborhood deepened their importance for me. I was yearning to spend the deepest part of myself on someone close, someone I could endow directly with the golden qualities of the brotherhood I joined in books. I was passionately attached to my family, but it would never have occurred to me to ask myself what I thought of them as individuals. They were the head of the great body to which I had been joined at birth. There was nothing I could *give* them, and at that time, nothing that I wanted to. What I did want was some voluntary and delighted gift of emotion to rise up in me; something that would surprise me in the giving, that would proceed directly from me, and was not, like the obedience of family love, a routine affair of every day. I wanted to bestow some affection that proceeded from an idea; to feel myself raised upwards by a human being who would cut me off from the old life. My family loved me, as I loved them, in well-worn measures of tribulation. We looked to each other for support; we recognized each other with a mutual sympathy and irritation; we all bore some part of each other in ourselves. So deep was this in me that not until many years later did I come to think of my parents as individuals from whom I could ever estrange myself or, an even more painful realization, human beings who could ever have had a life in which I played no part. I took them for granted as the height and depth of my outward existence, and I took their love for granted; it never occurred to me that there might be something free and happy in the response to that love—that there could be something more than loyalty in family love itself.

And so I gave myself to the Soloveys—or rather, tried to give myself to both, until I realized that it was not parents I wanted, but a woman, and that Mrs. Solovey was that woman. I was still at an age when I could have adopted them both, without diminishing or contradicting my longing for her. But the very thing that made her so lustrous to me—her air of not being quite placed in life, her detachment, her candid sensuality, as I imagined it—was missing in her husband's deterioration. As the store went from bad to worse, he seemed to plant himself more and more in the back of it, like a dead tree defying us to cut him down. He barricaded himself behind his counter, where his books lay in a mound of dust and gradually displaced the cheap toilet articles and placards advertising beauty preparations. Except in emergencies, hardly anyone came into his store, even to use the telephone. Most people were afraid of him, and the neighborhood kids took special delight in exasperating him by banging a handball above his apartment windows. Yet there was something indomitable in his bearing, and with it an ill-concealed contempt for us all, that made it impossible to feel sympathy for him. His blazing eyes, his dirty alpaca jacket always powdered with a light dust of cigarette ash, the walrus mustache that drooped down the sides of his mouth with an expression of disgust for us, for his life—everything seemed to say that he did not care how he lived, whatever we thought of him. Having determined to fail, his whole bearing seemed to say, he had chosen *us* to watch him; and he would fail just as he liked, shocking us as he went under, like a man drowning before our eyes whom our cries could not save. Perhaps he liked to shock us; perhaps our shame and incredulity at seeing him put back so far were things he could viciously enjoy, since the whole manner of his life was an assault on our own hopes and our plain sense of right and wrong. There was something positive in him that had chosen to die, that mocked all our competitive anxiety and our admiration for success. We failed every day, but we fought our failure; we hated it; we measured every action, every thought, by its help in getting us around failure. Mr. Solovey confused us. In some unspoken way, full of bitterness and scorn, he seemed to say that success did not matter.

THE others thought him crazy, and perhaps he was; but I thought I knew his secret, for I, too, was in love with his wife. I was perfectly sure that all his misery came from the force and bafflement of his attachment to her. The hopeless love between them had scoured them clean of *normal* concerns, like making money and getting on in the world and being parents. The store went to pieces, the two little girls in their foreign clothes played jacks all afternoon long on the front steps, Mr. Solovey denounced us with his eyes, and Mrs. Solovey walked among us in her dream of a better life. But alone, as I imagined it, they glided up and down in their apartment like two mutually fascinated fish. This was the way I saw them; her beauty was the only key I had to their mystery. I based it entirely on my incredulous delight in her.

I am sure that no one else saw Mrs. Solovey as I did or made so much of her helplessness. But she incarnated for me everything that was missing in my family life and in Brownsville. To the others she must have seemed only a thin and ailing woman, of some indeterminate age in the neighborhood of forty, whose aloofness would have been offensive if she had not so obviously been ill. But it was her dreaminess, her air of not being quite related to anything around her, that pleased me most. She floated through our lives; in some ways she was never really with us. All the better for me, who needed someone passive whom I could bend to my imagination. She was more accessible than any character I had ever found in a book, but as pliable; more real, but as deliciously unreal. There she was, only two flights of stairs below us, someone I could see every day, yet a woman like no other I had ever seen. Her blondness flashed out in our dark tenement, among our somber and dogged faces, with a smiling wantonness. I had not seen many fair-haired people until I met Mrs. Solovey. There were a few Russian Christian children at school, and there were the four daughters of our janitor, Mrs. Krylot, all of them with bright golden hair and faces as deeply carved and immobile as a woodcut; but they did not count; their blondness seemed naive and uncouth. Mrs. Solovey's I identified from the first with something direct and sinful, the very provocativeness of her hair being its sinfulness. Our dark coloring had a censorious and disciplined quality; I associated it with mind, control, effort, the denial thrown across the face of desire. But in Mrs. Solovey's blondness and languor I saw the complacent stirrings of nakedness itself.

Poor woman, she never knew how recklessly I took my toll of her. She was the perfection of all my fantasies. The poor details of her real life meant nothing to me; I could not see her true dimensions at all. I was so busy re-creating her to my own purposes that I ignored everything which might take her away from me. Yet in this was the symbolic sacrifice of my old self I had longed to make. For I did not, after all, want to see what she had in common with us—what would her charm have been to me then? I wanted to play on the margin of difference—her blondness, her deep quietness, her air of "cultured" suffering—that separated her from us. I wanted everything about her which lent her queerness in the eyes of Brownsville; I could dispense with the rest. More exactly, I sought out in her everything that was not stamped with our poverty, our moralism, our Jewishness. In my ignorance of any other life, in the appalling sameness with which we all duplicated each other's earnestness and anxiety, I had come to assume that Israel was a synonym for deprivation, and I was astonished and delighted to find in Mrs. Solovey, a Jewish woman, ties with the greater world outside that I had never thought I would have. In my mind all Jews were poor and all poor people were Jews. In some way I never dared admit to myself, I had come to believe that there were two kinds of people and that we, for some reason, were not really people. Mrs. Solovey's dignity, her gentleness, as much as the sexuality I conferred upon her, aroused me from the torpor of my self-pity, and made me realize I could ask everything of the world without changing my skin.

I did not understand this then, not even when we spoke together one afternoon.

She came into our kitchen one day, looking for my mother to make a dress for her. I was alone, doing my French lessons at the table. When she spoke to me in her timid, Russian-accented English, I felt myself flying back to the world of *Anna Karenina.* There was a grandeur of suffering in her face, in the spindly thinness of her body in the old-fashioned dress, that had for me some immediate connection with the 19th-century Russian novel. The characters of Tolstoy were always more real to me than the people who lived next door, and in my unappeasable longing for imaginary ancestors I had exaggerated the surviving but certainly not predominant Russian elements in our own household to fasten on the old Russian intelligentsia as my kind of people. Russian literature was the only secular culture my father brought to America; Russia was a daily reminiscence that flowed out of the samovar, that was kept alive in our veneration of libertarian socialist ideals, in the circle-necked blouses I wore as a child for photographs "à la Gorky," in endless discussion of the relatives who had stayed behind. There was a memory of Russia in our house that was entirely spiritual in its nostalgia. A part of us all was always reaching out to Russia as a country of the mind. To me, who had never seen it, who associated with it purely literary memories, Russia was the grand antithesis to all bourgeois ideals, a cultural image for truly free people. I was perfectly sure that there was no literature in the world like the Russian; that the only warm hearts in the world were Russian; that other people were always dully materialist, but that the Russian soul, like Nijinsky's dream of pure flight, could always leap outwards, past all barriers, to a lyric world in which ideal socialism and the fiery moodiness of Tschaikovsky's *Pathétique* would be strangely at home with each other.

When Mrs. Solovey stood in our kitchen that day, asking for my mother, I seized upon her intuitively as a living portion of my true homeland. I was glad that my mother was out; I felt that I could now enjoy Mrs. Solovey alone. She stood at the door, smiling uneasily, deliberating with herself whether to wait, and when I pressed her, gravely sat down on the other side of the table. I had already made so much of her, on the basis of our casual encounters in the downstairs hall, that seeing her so close gave me, pleased as I was, a curious feeling of alarm. How would it turn out? How did one address a secret image when it walked in on you, and sat down with you, and smiled, smiled uneasily, not fitting itself to the imagined design? Looking at her there, I found it hard to think of her as a wife and mother, held to the wildly unhappy husband below, to the two little girls who were always playing jacks by themselves on the front steps. She was Anna, Tolstoy's and my Anna, the sensual and kindly and aristocratically aloof heroine who was unhappily married, who bewitched men's minds, who shocked everyone in St. Petersburg by the gentle insistence of her sexual power. She might have just walked in from a frosty afternoon's ride with her lover on the Nevsky Prospekt, swathed in furs, a mink toque on her head, slyly impervious to the stares and whispers of the envious crowd.

"You are, uh, going perhaps to school, young man?" Mrs. Solovey asked after a long silence.

I nodded.

"Do you, uh, do you like going to school?"

I explained that I had mixed feelings on the subject.

"Oh!" she said doubtfully, not sure that she had understood. There was another long silence. Uneasily, I turned back to my French grammar.

"What are you studying, young man, so serious young man?" she smiled.

I glumly turned the book around.

Surprise and delight showed in her face. "You are studying French? You are perhaps already speaking it? Almost it is my favorite language! From the time I was a girl in Odessa I have been studying it with application, with pleasure. How pleasing it would be to speak French with you as I wait for your mother! Yes? Shall we have some conversation?"

"Yes, Mrs. Solovey," I fumbled. *"Il . . . il me . . . ferait? Il me ferait très heureux."*

She laughed. *"Ferait? Pas du tout!* And you have not a suggestion of the true accent! I suppose you are learning French only to read? But that is a mistake, I can assure you! It is necessary to speak it, to speak! Think how you would be happy to speak French well! To speak a foreign language is to depart out of the usual life. It takes you from yourself. Do you not think it is tiresome to speak the same language all the time? To feel that you are in a kind of prison, where the same words you speak every day are like the walls of a cell? To know with every word that you are the same, and no other, and that it is difficult to escape? To be in one's own language all the time is to be held fast. You cannot leave. But when I speak French I have the sensation that for a moment I have left, and I am happy." She smiled at me. "Come, will you repeat your lesson to me?"

I read the words slowly from the book. *"Le crayon de ma soeur est sur la table. Je m'appelle Jean. Ma soeur s'appelle Marie. J'ai dix ans. Ma soeur a treize ans. Mon père s'appelle Henri. . . ."*

"Et vous?" she interrupted. *"Comment vous appelez-vous?"*

"Alfred."

"Alfred! *Voilà un joli nom! Un nom anglais, n'est-ce-pas? En connaissez-vous l'origine?"*

"What?"

She sighed. *"En-connaissez-vous-l'origine?"*

"Je pense . . . pense . . . un roi d'Angleterre?"

"Bien sûr. Et la légende des petits gâteaux?"

"What?" I did not understand a word.

She tried again, very slowly.

I shook my head.

"But what is it they teach you in this American public school!"

"We're not up to irregular verbs yet."

"The old peasant woman, she asked the king to watch the cakes on the hearth. That they should not burn. But he thought and thought only of his poor country as he sat there, and he let them burn."

"La vielle paysanne . . . était . . . était. . . ."

"Fâchée. Magnifique! She was very, very displeased. *Que c'est facile!* You must not stop now. Tell me something more about yourself. *Quel âge avez-vous?"*

"J'ai quatorze ans."

"Vous avez quatorze ans! How nicely you say that! My older girl, she is only nine. *Maintenant, dites-moi: qu'est-ce que vous aimez le mieux au monde?"*

I STARED at her glumly. The word I wanted most to say was *"tu,"* but it would have been meaningless.

"Alas, I fear you have not understood me. I must be careful to speak more slowly. *Quand-je-parle-comme-ceci-me-comprenez-vous?"*

"Oui."

"Bien. Qu'est-ce-que vous aimez le mieux au monde?"

"Livres, je . . . pense."

"Les livres!" She laughed. *"Un gentil aveu! Quel genre de livres?"*

I flourished every kind I could think of.

"Tout ça? Tout? Vous êtes un peu pédant."

"What?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Let us try again, young man, young scholar man. Do you not like the sea?"

"Oui. J'aime la mer beaucoup."

"J'aime beaucoup la mer. Encore."

"J'aime beaucoup la mer."

"Et puis?"

"Les montagnes."

"Et ensuite?"

"I know what I want to say, but don't know how to say it."

"Le cinéma? Le sport? Les jeunes filles? Les jeunes filles ne vous déplaisent pas, naturellement?"

"Yes," I said. "I like some girls very much. But . . .it's on the tip of my tongue. . . ."

"Pas en anglais!"

"Well," I said lamely, "I like summer."

"Summer! I love summer, too. More than any other season. *Pourquoi préférez-vous l'été?"*

"La . . . la chaud?" I gave it up. "The warmth . . . the evenness."

"I understand very well. I feel sympathy with your answer. I myself come from Odessa, in the South of Russia. Do you know of Odessa? On the Black Sea. One of the most beautiful cities in all the world, full of sun and white buildings. It is really a part of Greece. When I was a girl in Odessa, I would go down to the harbor every day and stare out across the water and imagine myself on a ship, a ship with blue sails, that would take me around the world."

"You have lived in many places."

"Oui. Nous avons habité des pays différents. La Russie, la France, l'Italie, la Palestine. Yes, many places, young man."

"Why did you come *here?"* I asked suddenly.

She looked at me timidly for a moment. I could not tell what she felt, or how much I had betrayed. But in some way my question disconcerted her, for it suddenly blew away our little conversation piece. She rose, made a stiff little bow, and went out without saying another word.

SHE came back several times to see my mother; occasionally, I saw her in the street. But she made no effort to continue my practice in French, and I did not know how to ask. For a long time I did not see her at all. We knew that Mr. Solovey had gone bankrupt, and was looking for someone to buy the fixtures. There were rumors that once, in the middle of the night, he had beaten her so violently that people in the building had been awakened by her screams. But there was still nothing precise we knew about them, and after many weeks in which I vainly looked for her everywhere and once, on a foolish pretext, tried to gain admittance to the apartment, I almost forgot her. The store was finally sold, and Mr. Solovey found a job in a urinalysis laboratory on Nostrand Avenue. But they continued to live in the apartment back of the store. One morning, while her children were at school and her husband was away, Mrs. Solovey sealed all the doors and windows with tape, and sat over the open gas jets in the kitchen until she was dead. It was raining the day they buried her. Because she was a suicide, the rabbi was reluctant to say the necessary prayers inside the synagogue. But they prevailed upon him to come out on the porch, and looking down on the hearse as it waited in the street, he intoned the service over her coffin. There were hundreds of the neighborhood women in their shawls, weeping in the rain. Most of them had never seen Mrs. Solovey, but they wept out of pity for her children, and out of terror and awe because someone who had lived with them was dead. My mother was among the mourners outside the synagogue, and I needed urgently to find her. But the crowd was so large that I could not see her, and I waited in the back until the service was over.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

REVEALMENT AND CONCEALMENT IN LANGUAGE

Reflections on the Nature of Literature

HAYIM NAHMAN BIALIK

Translator's Introduction: In this essay, Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934), the foremost poet of the Hebrew renaissance, treats a problem that has assumed particular relevance not only in modern literature, but in modern culture as a whole. It is the question of the function of art. Is the purpose of art to "communicate" an author's complex of emotion and thought? Or is art a disinterested statement of aesthetic truth? Is art intended to "represent" reality? Or is it essentially non-representional, "non-objective"? Is art primarily decoration, or entertainment, or simply a natural function of human psychology? What is the relation of the content and function of art to its form?

Whether or not art serves some, or all, of these purposes, whether the relation of function and content to form is necessary or fortuitous—the investigation of these subjects involves fundamental assertions of world views, of the nature of man, of metaphysics.

Bialik's insight is that the language of art is a concealment of reality, rather than a "revealment" of it. Language is the barrier man erects to "divert" himself from the "void" of metaphysical doubt, the "nothingness." Paradoxically, man is constantly and vainly attempting to "open" the "closed" reality, to level the very barriers of languages that he has himself constructed as a form of self-protection. The changes in language are a reflection of this perpetual effort. For linguistic "systems" prove insufficient time and again, not to communicate, represent, or objectify, but to conceal and distort the intolerable reality. They are succeeded by other systems, better able to enclose man from reality. Bialik concludes with a brilliant apostrophe to "song, tears and laughter," the primal triad which "begin where words leave off," and "are come to open rather than close."

It was inevitable that Bialik should have written about the function of literature in terms of Jewish mythology and tradition, especially Cabala. But what he has made of the classic sources is peculiarly his own. Ranging from the myth of creation in the Book of Genesis through medieval gnosticism to 19th-century positivism, he achieves a statement that is surprisingly contemporary and thoroughly his own.

Bialik's dialectic is that of the Talmudist, profound as well as ingenious. "The express reply to a question is really no more than another version of the question itself"—and, consequently, a diversion of man from reality. His conclusions are bold and uncompromising. Like language, faith itself is another necessary diversion. "Moses did well to hide his face."

But language reveals as well as conceals: what the language of words would hide, the "languages" of "song, tears, and laughter" reveal.
—Jacob Sloan

EVERY day, consciously and unconsciously, human beings scatter heaps of words to the wind, with all their various associations; few men indeed know or reflect on what these words were like in the days when they were at the height of their power. Many of these words came into the world only after difficult and prolonged birth pangs endured by many generations. Others flashed like sudden lightning to illuminate with one leap a complete world. Many were paths through which living hosts passed, each leaving behind its shadow and odor. There were words which served as receptacles for delicate and profound thoughts and exalted emotions. Some words were like the high mountains of the Lord, others were a great abyss. Sometimes all the vital essence of a profound philosophic system, its complete immortality, were hidden in one small world. There were words that laid low nations and lands in their time, deposed kings from their thrones, shook the foundations of heaven and earth. But there came a day when these same words, having fallen from their height, were thrown aside, and now people wallow in them as they chat, as casually as one wallows in grass.

Is this cause for wonder? The laws of nature are not to be questioned. That is the way of the world: Words rise to greatness, and, falling, turn profane. What is essential is that language contains no word so slight that the hour of its birth was not one of powerful and awesome self-revealment, a lofty victory of the spirit. So, for example, it was with the first man, when, taken aback by the sound of thunder ("The voice [sound] of the Lord is in the power, the voice [sound] of the Lord is in the glory"), overcome by amazement and terror-stricken, he fell on his face before the divinity. Then a kind of savage sound burst spontaneously from his lips—let us assume, in imitation of nature—resembling a beast's roar, a sound close to the "r. . r" to be found in the words for thunder in many languages. Did not this savage cry vastly free his confounded soul? Was a smaller measure of the power, the fearfulness, and the exultation of creative victory revealed in this echo of a spirit shaken to its depths than are revealed in the "happy phrases" on exalted subjects expressed by any of the great seers in moments of spiritual elevation? Did not this meager syllable, this seed of the future word, embrace a complete volume of primordial emotions, powerful in their novelty and vigorous in their savagery, resembling terror, fear, amazement, submission, astonishment, preparedness for self-defense, and the like? And if this was true, was not the first man himself at that moment an artist and lofty seer, an intuitive creator of an expression—and a very faithful expression, for himself, at any rate—pointing to a deep and complicated inner disturbance? As one thinker has commented, how much of profound philosophy, of divine revealment was there in that small word "I" that the first man uttered!

Nevertheless, before our very eyes these same words, and a great many others like them, are being lost in language—and it does not matter. We are inwardly almost untouched. Their core is consumed and their spiritual strength fades or is hidden, and only their husks, cast out from the private domain to the public, still persist in language, doing slack service within the limited boundaries of logic and social intercourse, as external signs and abstractions for objects and images. It has come to the point where the human language has become two languages, built upon one another's destruction: one, an internal language, that of solitude and the soul, in which what is essential is "how?" as in music—the domain of poetry; the other, the external language, that of abstraction and generalization, in which the essential is "what?" as in mathematics—the domain of logic.

Who knows whether it is not for the best that man should inherit the husk of a word without its core—for thus he can fill the husk, or supply it constantly from his own substance, and pour his own inner light into it. "Every man prefers his own measure." If the spoken word were to remain throughout history at the height of its glowing power, if the same complex of emotion and thought which became attached to it in its prime were to accompany it always, perhaps no "speaking creature" would ever attain to its self-revealment and particular illumination. In the final analysis, an empty vessel can hold matter, while a full vessel cannot; if the empty word enslaves, how much more is this true of the full word?

What is there to wonder at? This:—the feeling of security and the satisfaction that accrue to human beings when they speak, as though they are really leading their thoughts or feelings beside the still waters and across the iron bridge of the Messiah, without their having any conception of how shaky is their bridge of mere words, how deep and dark the void is that opens at their feet, and how much every step taken safely partakes of the miraculous.

FOR it is clear that language with all its associations does not introduce us at all into the inner area, the essence of things, but that, on the contrary, language itself stands as a barrier before them. On the other side of the barrier of language, behind its curtain, stripped of its husk of speech, the spirit of man wanders ceaselessly.

"There is no speech and there are no words," but only a perpetual search, an eternal "what?" frozen on man's lips. In truth, there is no place even for this "what?", implying as it does the hope of a reply. Rather there is—"nothingness"; man's lips are closed. If, nevertheless, man does achieve speech and with it contentment, it is only because of the extent of his fear at remaining alone for one moment with that dark "void," face to face with the "nothingness," with no barrier between them. "For man shall not look on me and live," says the void, and every speech, every pulsation of speech, partakes of the nature of a concealment of "nothingness," a husk enclosing within itself a dark seed of the eternal "stet" [let it stand]. *No word contains the complete dissolution of any question.* What does it contain? *The question's concealment.* It makes no difference *what* the particular word is—you can exchange it for another—just so long as it contains the power momentarily to serve as concealment and barrier. Dumb music and symbolic mathematics—two hostile kin at two parallel extremes—attest unanimously that the word is not necessarily what it seems, that it is nothing but web and woof of the void. Or rather, just as physical bodies become sensible to the eye and determinate by virtue of the fact that they serve as barriers before light in space, so the word's existence takes place by virtue of the process by which it closes up the small aperture of the void, constructing a barrier to prevent the void's darkness from welling up and overflowing its bounds.

HE WHO sits alone in the depths of darkness, trembling, speaks to himself: he recites the Confessional, or whispers a word. Why? *Because the word is a "talisman" which serves to divert him and to dissipate his fear.* It is the same with the spoken word —or with complete systems of words. The word's power does not consist in its explicit content—if, generally speaking, there is such a thing—but in the diversion that is involved in it.

Averting one's eyes is, in the final resort, the easiest and most pleasant means, although an illusory one, of escape from danger; in situations where keeping one's eyes open constitutes the danger there is really no securer refuge, and "Moses did well to conceal his face."

Who knows, perhaps the truth is that from the time of creation speech has not been cast as a social vessel to pass between two men, i.e., it has not been speech for its own sake. It may have always had its source in men sitting alone, speaking to themselves, as a spiritual need, i.e., "speech for its own sake" falling in the class of "When my spirit within me is dumb, I shall speak unto my heart. . . ." The first man was not content until he had spoken *himself* aloud for himself to hear. For the sound that at the time of creation drew man's self-recognition up from the depths of the void—that very sound suddenly stood as a dividing wall between man and that which is on the "other side," as though to say: "Henceforth, O man, thou shalt direct thy face toward that which is 'on this side.' Thou shalt not look *behind* thee, and if thou shouldst—it shall not avail thee, for man shall not see the 'void' face to face and live. The dream that is forgotten shall not be recalled. Thy desire shall be to the 'void' and speech shall rule over thee."

And, in truth, "knowledge and speech" rule only over that which is "on this side," within the four cubits of space and time. "Man walketh in the shadow merely"; the nearer he approaches the illusory light *that is before him,* the larger grows the shadow *behind him,* and the surrounding darkness is never lessened. Perhaps "on this side" everything can be explained—strictly or liberally, but explained. What is essential is that man's atmosphere of knowledge must never for a single moment be rid of words, crowded and consecutive like the links in a suit of armor, without so much as a hair's breadth between them. The light of knowledge and speech—the glowing coal and the flame—is an eternal light that must not be extinguished. Indeed, the very area "on this side" that lies within the bounds of the illusory light—in the final analysis, of what importance is it compared with the endless sea of universal darkness that still remains, and will always remain, *outside?*

And, in the final analysis, it is that very eternal darkness that is so fearsome—that darkness that from the time of creation has always secretly drawn man's heart to it, arousing his hidden yearning to gaze on it for a brief moment. Every man is afraid of it, and every man is drawn to it. With our very lips we construct barriers, words upon words and systems upon systems, and place them in front of the darkness to conceal it; but then our nails immediately begin to dig at those barriers, in an attempt to open the smallest of windows, the tiniest of cracks, through which we may gaze for a single moment at that which is "on the other side." But alas, vain is the labor of man! At the very moment when the crack is apparently opened—another barrier, in the shape of a new word or system, suddenly stands in the place of the old, shutting off the view again.

Thus, there is never an end. A word cometh and a word goeth, a system riseth and a system falleth—and the old eternal "stet" remains as powerful as ever, unalterable and irreducible. Signing a note, or listing a debt in a ledger, is far from being the debt's liquidation; it merely momentarily removes the note's burden from one's memory—and no more. The same is the case with definitive speech, that is to say, the assignment of names and the putting up of orderly fences around images and their associations. No reply to the question of essence is ever possible in the process of speech. Even the express reply to a question is really no more than another version of the question itself—"this is amazing" we understand as meaning "pause and think" (a form of concealment instead of revealment). If we were to strip all the words and systems completely bare to their innermost core, in the end, *after the last reduction,* we should be left with nothing in our hands but one all-inclusive word. Which? Again, the same terrible "what?" behind which stands the same X, even more terrible—the "nothingness." Man chooses to tear the debt into small pieces under the false illusion that he is thus easing the final payment. When this illusion fails him, he exchanges the present word for another, the present system for another—that is to say, he writes a new note to take the place of the old, and delays or gives himself more time for the final payment. In either event the debt is never paid in full.

So, a word or system declines and yields to another, not because it has lost the power to reveal, to enlighten, to invalidate the "stet," either totally or in part, but for the very opposite reason—because the word or system has been worn out by being manipulated and used, is no longer able to conceal and hide adequately, and can, of course, no longer divert mankind momentarily. Man, gazing for a moment through the open crack, finding to his terror that awesome "void" before him again, hurries to close the crack for a time—with a new word. That is to say, he seizes the new "talisman," like its predecessor a proven momentary diversion—and is saved from the terror.

Do not wonder at this! The "talisman" is effective for those who believe in it, for faith itself is no more than a diversion. Do not the "speaking creatures" themselves provide an analogy? So long as man moves and breathes—he occupies space and everything is apparently comprehensible; "everything is all right." All the flow of life, all its content, is nothing but a continuous effort, an unremitting toil to be diverted. Every moment spent in "pursuit of" is at the same time a "flight from," and flight, and flight alone, is its wages. The wages of pursuit is flight. At every moment the pursuer finds his momentary happiness not in that which he attains to, but in that which he escapes from, a fact which gives him a momentary shadow of security. "For to him that is joined to all the living there is security."

But man dies—and his space becomes unoccupied. There is nothing to serve as a diversion—and the barrier is down. Everything suddenly becomes incomprehensible. The hidden X descends upon us in all its fearful shape—and we sit mourning on the earth before it for a moment in darkness and dumb as a stone. But for a moment only. For the Master of all life anticipates the opening with a closing. He immediately furnishes us with a new "talisman" with which to divert ourselves and dissipate the fear. Before the covering stone is sealed over the dead, the space that was emptied is again occupied with a word, whether it be one of eulogy, or solace, or philosophy, or belief in the soul's immortality, or the like. The most dangerous moment—both in speech and in life—is that between concealments, when the void looms. But such moments are very rare both in speech and in life, and for the most part men skip over them unawares. "The Lord preserveth the simple."

From all that has been said, it would appear that there is a vast difference between the language of the masters of prose and that of the masters of poetry. The former, the masters of exposition, find their sanction in the principle of analogy, and in the elements common to images and words, in that which is established and constant in language, in the accepted version of things—consequently, they walk confidently through language. To what may they be compared? To one who crosses a river walking on hard ice frozen into a solid block. Such a man may and can divert his attention completely from the covered depths flowing underneath his feet. But their opposites, the masters of allegory, of interpretation and mystery, spend all their days in pursuit of the unifying principle in things, of the solitary something, of the point that makes one body of all the images, of the fleeting moment that is never repeated. They pursue their solitary inwardness and the personal quality of things. Therefore, the latter [the masters of allegory] are forced to flee all that is fixed and inert in language, all that is opposed to their goal of the vital and mobile in language. On the contrary, using their unique keys, they are obliged themselves to introduce into language at every opportunity—never-ending motion, new combinations and associations. The words writhe in their hands; they are extinguished and lit again, flash on and off like the engravings of the signet in the stones of the High Priest's breast-plate, grow empty and become full, put off a soul and put on a soul. By this process there takes place, in the material of language, exchanges of posts and locations: one mark, a change in the point of one iota, and the old word shines with a new light.

The profane turns sacred, and the sacred profane. Long-established words are constantly being pulled out of their settings, as it were, and exchanging places with one another. Meanwhile, between concealments the void looms. And that is the secret of the great influence of the language of poetry. And to what may they [the masters of allegory] be compared? To one who crosses a river when it is breaking up, by stepping across floating, moving blocks of ice. He dare not set his foot on any one block for longer than a moment, longer than it takes him to leap from one block to the next, and so on. Between the breaches the void looms, the foot slips, danger is close. . . .

Nevertheless, some of this group, too, "enter in peace and leave in peace," crossing in safety from one shore to the other, "for the Lord preserveth not merely the simple."

So much for the language of words. But, in addition, "there are yet to the Lord" languages without words: song, tears, and laughter. And the speaking creature has been found worthy of them all. These languages begin where words leave off, and their purpose is not to close but to open. They rise up from the void. They *are* the rising up of the void. Therefore, at times they overflow and sweep us off in the irresistible multitude of their waves; therefore, at times they cost a man his wits, or even his life. Every creation of the spirit which lacks an echo of one of these three languages is not really alive, and it were best that it had never come into the world.

ON THE HORIZON

INTERFAITH AT WALLA WALLA

A Visit to the Grass Roots

JOSEPH H. GUMBINER

MY INVITATION to spend a week at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, came as an emergency request from the Jewish Chautauqua Society. I was very tired and this sounded like the ideal vacation. A trifle cold up there for a Southern Californian, but in a snug hotel room with a plain telephone minus the rabbinical attachment that makes it explode into frantic peals of noise all through the day and night, I could withstand the weather. In one or two set speeches a day I could tell the students about the truths of Judaism and what nice people the Jews are. It added up to a well-earned rest. No question about it: I must respond to the call of duty and the JCS. I waved goodbye to my wife, clutched the brief case with the stock lectures, boarded the plane.

We put down in Walla Walla just ahead of what looked like an impending light flurry of snow. I received a message to call Mr. Sheldon, Dean of Men, and repaired to the Marcus Whitman Hotel to start my rest.

The room had all the necessary equipment, a good bed, and a telephone that was not ringing. Gingerly I approached that instrument and called the Dean. He was happy to learn of my arrival, urged me to get a good night's rest, and to come to his home at about eleven-thirty the next morning. He would then tell me about the Campus Conference on Religion, we would have Sunday dinner, and at three o'clock there would be a retreat for the guest speakers and the student members of the campus committees in charge of the conference. How right I'd been!—In these smaller towns people still know how to live. With a sigh of contentment I prepared for about ten hours of sleep, a superb breakfast, a leisurely stroll to the Dean's home.

I awoke late and at peace with the world. True, the flurry of snow looked like a blizzard; it had already blanketed the city and gave no sign of abating, and I could hear the wind howling around the corner of the hotel. But the snow seemed rather fun, after two years of the sunshine and orange juice of California. Right cheerfully I began shaving.

THEN it happened. The phone rang harshly. Wiping the lather from around my lips I found myself talking to a very agitated Dean. It seemed that the reverend visitor from Minneapolis, scheduled to deliver the sermon at the morning service of the First Congregational Church, was still somewhere in Idaho in a train stalled by the storm. Could I hurry over to the church by eleven and speak in his place? Yes, I supposed I could. Relieved, the Dean hung up. It was ten-thirty. I rushed back to the wash basin, took up my razor, and almost cut my chin off.

Too often, the typical "interfaith" meeting or conference, for all its good intentions, is no more than a drearily formal bow to a lifeless "unity." JOSEPH H. GUMBINER here records a refreshingly different experience—one that indicates the possibility of a real and stimulating give-and-take between religious groups. Rabbi Gumbiner was recently appointed director of the Hillel Foundation at Yale University He was born in Pittsfield, Illinois, in 1906, and attended the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College. His article "Existentialism and Father Abraham" appeared in the February 1948 COMMENTARY.

Somehow I staunched the flow of blood, dressed, ate breakfast, and in lieu of the unavailable taxi, ran several blocks through the snow to the church. On the way I tried to piece together an opus I had once delivered on "Youth in the Synagogue"; there had been a text from the fourth or fifth Psalm. . . . I arrived looking like a snow man.

The minister of the church was very happy to see me. It seemed that he had been looking forward to this occasion for weeks as an opportunity to sit in a regular pew with his wife. He lent me a robe with a zipper, told me the sermon would be broadcast, pointed out the side of the pulpit where I was to sit, and scurried off. I was just in time to fall in line at the end of the procession that was already moving down the center aisle of the large church, singing a hymn.

Summoning what dignity I had left, I found the proper seat on the pulpit in front of a congregation of several hundred. My problems were not over. Where was I to speak from? The sermon was to be broadcast. The students conducting the service were down in front but there was no microphone there. High up above my side of the pulpit I could see a Gothic-type lectern. Was that the proper place? I hardly wanted to dash across the wide pulpit during the service to ask one of the young people. During a hymn I craned my neck far around and, happily, saw a wire coming from the side of the lectern. Was it attached to a lamp or a mike? My introduction came. I ascended the steps of the lectern, tripping on the reverend's robe. It was a mike. I remembered the text, giving it in the holy tongue to the edification of the congregation, and tied the whole together in precisely the thirty minutes allotted by the broadcasting company.

Following the service I was taken to the Dean's house. Dean Sheldon is a quiet man, portly and pleasant. He is a serious student of religion, liberal in his theology, but cognizant of other trends. Greeting me warmly, he introduced me to the other members of the "team" as they arrived. There was an older man of Irish origin who had a stock of neat formulas for students to remember: "Christianity is a faith to follow, a cult to confirm, a creed to confess, a communion to cultivate." I am not sure the students appreciated the pat phrases. The man for whom I had substituted at the church arrived later in the day. He was a preacher of talent, with a friendly disposition, and well equipped with apt illustrations and witticisms above the usual pulpit level. There was a teacher of sociology interested in religion as a kind of expression making for personal integration and social adjustment. Rounding out the visiting speakers were two young men, one a teacher of church history and religious education, and the other a professor of philosophy and religion.

The Dean was a good host. With a touch of irony, he told me he had read my article in COMMENTARY last year. Remembering what I had written of the caliber of interfaith occasions, my appetite somewhat slackened. But the Dean meant to cause me no discomfiture. He sketched briefly the program that was in store for us during the week. I for one refused to take it too seriously. Impossible to believe that there would be students to eat breakfast with at seven o'clock each morning. Which professors would invite what visitors to teach their classes? How many students would throng the planned seminars? I thought the intensive program the Dean outlined just a hopeful academic fiction.

After dinner we met the students and received our specific assignments—and right there my vacation began to crumble. I had a host, a very genial young man from Seattle. My "host" had a girl friend. My host told me, quietly but firmly, that he would see to it that I reached every class, seminar, counseling appointment, luncheon, dinner, and special event on time. His girl friend would help him. And thus it was to be. Fearful that I would get lost in the labyrinth of the Whitman campus, my host or his girl friend met me after every class or seminar and escorted me to the next session. The maximum interval was usually five minutes. My bodyguards saw that I got there in time.

Sunday night, after a large reception for all the guest speakers, I stumbled back over the ice to my hotel, warned that breakfast was at the far end of the campus and started promptly at seven.

NEXT morning I arose, as I was to do all that week of interfaith understanding, at six. That morning I managed to get a cab to the campus—no one else in Walla Walla was insane enough to brave the snow drifts at so early an hour. Never imagine that the breakfasts were formalities, spent in idle pleasantries and words of tribute for the fine work we had done the day before. On the contrary. Each morning thirty or forty students attended. They included the "roving reporters," whose task it was to circulate among the student body the day before and then meet with us the next morning so as to point out what we had done wrong, how we had sidestepped issues, what changes the students wanted made for the new day. We listened meekly. Each morning, I left the table for my eight o'clock hour of instruction properly chastened and with the firm resolve to do better.

Yes, the hours of instruction had materialized; there was no dearth of classroom invitations from the faculty. I found myself teaching seven very diverse hours during my stay at Whitman: two in synagogue music, two in educational psychology, one each in religion, sociology, and political science. What the instructor wanted in each case was the Jewish background and experience with respect to the topic assigned. The students in each class showed keen interest, asked searching questions, engaged in long discussion which made the hours pass very quickly.

Synagogue music raised a problem. I was highly unprepared, being neither a musician nor a musicologist. Guided by my host I found my way to the college library, consulted the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, and even found I. Z. Idelsohn's book, *Jewish Music*—part of a prominently displayed exhibit of Judaica, most of which had been presented to the library by the JCS. I noted that it had been borrowed several times before, presumably by individuals not in the category of visiting lecturers in a jam. With charming girl students of musical theory and composition at the piano, we soon filled the class room with the *ahavah rabbah* and other traditional modes.

In the educational psychology classes I led discussions on the problem of religion in the public schools and its relation to the American principle of the separation of church and state. Many of the future school teachers were amazed to hear that such a problem existed. Coming largely from the rural areas of the Northwest, they had just assumed that the schools, like the country itself, were Christian in a rather vague, generalized way. After all, there was little at Whitman itself to suggest any more complex pattern of American life. Only two out of nine hundred students were introduced to me as Jewish. (This was no indication of an unfriendly admission policy: the Dean suggested that I recommend Jewish students of qualified background as applicants for admission.)

In the course on religion I dealt with source readings in Judaism. The sociology hour was concerned with Judaism and racial theories. The political science students wanted to know about the internal political orientation of the state of Israel, and were intensely interested in the philosophy and status of the political parties that make up the Knesset.

LUNCH and dinner each day were provided by the various fraternities, sororities, and college dining halls. After each meal there was a bull session during which the college "skeptics" loosed their heavy ammunition against the emissaries of religion. During the afternoons three seminars had been planned to run concurrently, with visiting leaders shifting about among them on a daily schedule. One was to deal with theological problems of belief, one with religion in relation to politics and economics, and one with organized religion and society. The first two proved to be of much wider appeal and the third was dropped. The two that survived, however, could hardly be called seminars, since each afternoon as many as one hundred students turned up to overcrowd the largest classrooms. The discussions were lengthy, pointed, and vivacious; the students kept us alert and working hard for at least two hours. Add to this some kind of special event on campus each night (not to speak of four unrelated long-lost friends who located me through the newspaper publicity and drove over for visits at the hotel late at night)—my "vacation" soon became about the hardest period of constant labor in my experience. Through ice and snow, and later the slush of a thaw, I trotted from the infirmary (where they sprayed my failing throat) to the classrooms to the library to the fraternity houses to the dormitories to the hotel in town. There I collapsed for four or five hours of sleep and started the whole round over again. I ended the week feeling like a sponge from which the last drop had been squeezed.

Nor was this all. Saving the best for last, the student committee, evidently fearful lest the visitors fall into evil habits of idleness, arranged for thirty-minute periods of "personal consultation." This meant that any student could see any religious visitor he desired by making an appointment during the latter's "free" time. This ambitious little plan was widely publicized, and a desk was set up in the center of the administration building to facilitate appointments. The first day nothing happened. Then we began to get acquainted with the students through the classes, seminars, meals, bull sessions, and special events. Appointments began to pile up. I myself had fourteen of these personal consultations, all of them, of course, with non-Jewish students. Fortunately the college had assigned me a very pleasant conference room. It had a comfortable couch and I was usually able to sleep approximately five minutes between appointments. Some of my colleagues were less fortunate. They had to sleep in hard arm chairs.

One of the first personal interviews was with an Armenian student. He wanted to know what constituted a Jew. After we had talked a while we realized that both his people and mine lacked racial distinctiveness, possessed their own religious tradition, and stemmed from a national center whence they had been dispersed—and that neither the Jews nor the Armenians are as queer as they might appear in this customary world of facile human cataloguing.

A girl came in whose home was on a farm in central Washington. This was her first time away from home. She explained that she lived with a family in town, with whom she had been happy—until she had returned to the house the day before full of the news that there was a visiting rabbi on campus at Whitman. To her surprise, the family had reacted with the strongest prejudice, maintaining that no Jews, and certainly no rabbis, should be allowed at the college. The girl had become emotionally upset, almost physically ill, and had to leave the family dinner table, though she hoped the family hadn't understood why. "What can I do," she asked me, "to fight this terrible prejudice called anti-Semitism?" She had never seen a Jew before coming to Whitman, and this was her first experience with prejudice. I tried to help her regain her composure. I explained that in her present state of mind she could do nothing to help. I urged her to read and study all the facets of this social disease. I promised materials about Judaism and the Jewish people (which I dispatched soon after returning home). She vowed to acquire the knowledge and the force to help fight anti-Semitism whenever she encountered it. If my young friend holds to her purpose there will be a strong citadel of democracy somewhere in central Washington.

A boy came in who had grown up in a farming community in Idaho. He was a Mormon with the fine features and clear complexion so often seen among his co-religionists. He, too, had never been away from home, and his matriculation at the non-denominational college in far-away Walla Walla, instead of the Mormon college in nearby Utah which his family had urged him to attend, created a stir. But he had insisted on a change of scene. How far he had come in his thinking his first question made evident: "Rabbi, you seem to tell the students the truth as you see it. Can I really believe in the doctrines of the Mormon religion?" I was deeply moved by this Mormon boy's confidence, and I explained to him that, being no expert on Mormon doctrine, I could offer no authoritative opinion in that field. I then asked him what he meant by "belief" and received the answer I expected, belief in the sense of knowledge arrived at by scientific methods of inquiry. Explaining the difference between the relative knowledge of science (which seems so absolute), the approximate conclusions of reason (which appear so precise), and the subjective truths intuited and held by faith (the eternal truths of religion by which men live), I could then point out that while the doctrines of his church might not be amenable to a scientific or purely rational approach, they most certainly could be held in faith. I added that this was precisely the case in Judaism, the oldest religious tradition in the Western world. In spite of its respect for reason and experience, venerable Judaism, just like recently born Mormonism, also rested ultimately on faith, not on empirical investigation or rational demonstration. The student thanked me, saying that it was a great relief to learn that even so ancient a religion as Judaism rested in the end on faith. If that were true, he saw no reason for denying the doctrines of his church. We parted on that note.

Another boy came who seemed a bit out of place at Whitman. He had come from a large Eastern city and his early playmates and his closest friend had all been Jews. Tomorrow he was to be initiated into a fraternity. "What should I do," he asked me, "about joining an organization the constitution of which would bar my best friend because he is a Jew?" After some talk, it transpired that he had a deep sense of guilt because in childhood he had been a member of neighborhood gangs which tormented Jewish boys. Now the initiation, so close at hand, seemed like a direct betrayal of his friend in the East. He could not decide whether to refuse affiliation with the fraternity or to join and work from within against anti-Semitism. Feeling a certain instability in him, I advised him to go through with it and then to use whatever influence he could to strengthen the growing anti-discrimination movement in fraternities and sororities. I do not envy this boy the tension between the feelings of guilt rooted in his childhood and his growing ethical sensitivity.

WHAT made this visit to Whitman different from the interfaith work I had engaged in for many years? Heretofore such occasions had seemed meaningless, on the intellectual and emotional level of a gospel meeting when the tabernacle is three-fourths empty, tasteless, almost laughable both to myself and the intelligent students. The Whitman experience indicated that first of all one must have a large, interested student group as a nucleus, and the strong affirmative support of the university administration. At Whitman we had thirty or forty keenly involved students, and the Dean and faculty had put every resource of the college (except money) behind them. Perhaps the fact that it was a small college helped, too—indeed my faith in the small college as by far the best place for undergraduate study was confirmed over and over again during the week. (Of course, there is no Jewish life on a campus numbering only two recognized Jews. But Jewish activity can exist if there are fifty Jewish students, and there might easily be that many at Whitman.) As a small institution of higher learning, Marcus Whitman College has the spirit, the color, the feeling of a true social nexus, a community—all that seems missing from our enormous, impersonal factories of education. I began to understand why so many of our leaders in all fields are men and women who grew up in rural areas and small towns.

During an evaluation hour at the closing seminar, one girl said: "Although the conference was concerned primarily with religion, I believe it has had a great effect in decreasing anti-Semitic feeling on the campus. Many of us had never known any Jewish people well. The rabbi's presence here has made a big difference in our attitude." I replied that while I was naturally happy to hear such sentiments expressed, I was not too sanguine about eliminating prejudice through enlightenment. The deeply prejudiced person, unhappily, needs his hatred badly and hugs it to him in spite of the conscious knowledge that it is groundless and unworthy. The same girl spoke up again: "But I wasn't talking about psychotics, just about the average people who have been exposed to prejudice and haven't quite made up their minds." Here I believe we have the practical heart of the problem. We need not teach those who are already emancipated. We cannot teach the lunatic fringe. But in between lies the vast majority of the American people. Surely under proper circumstances they are amenable to enlightenment.

It also occurred to me that the positive approach of the Jewish Chautauqua Society is all too little known to the Jewish community of the United States. This poorly financed project of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods makes possible visits like the one I have described in more than four hundred American college campuses and many church summer training camps each year.

AT WHITMAN, as at every other campus and camp where I have carried on this work, students asked a favorite question: "How does one become a Jew?" It is our custom to assume that this question is merely a request for factual information, and we give a formal answer descriptive of the traditional Jewish conversion procedure. In so doing I think we may be missing the point completely. I have come to believe that in many cases the question is actually asked in dead earnest, not academically or in the search for mere knowledge. It deserves a better answer than a quotation from the "Rabbi's Manual."

How *does* one become a Jew? By birth? By Bar Mitzvah or confirmation? By singing "Hatikvah" or signing a check to the UJA? By being born in the state of Israel? I do not mean to belittle these events or acts, merely to point out the simple fact that through them no man ever became a Jew in the deepest sense. How then? One becomes a Jew only through personal commitment, by faith in which a man stakes his life on the truth of that revelation of God called Judaism. Very well then, if this is so, why must this faith be limited to those born into Jewish families or of so-called Jewish blood?

I do not know the answer to this problem, but this I think I know with reasonable certainty: if liberal Judaism were to embark on even a modest missionary activity, many fine, high-minded young people of non-Jewish birth would come to the Jewish faith. They are prepared now to accept the Jewish aspects of Christianity. They resist and deny the pagan elements which have been mixed (not blended) with the fundamental Jewish revelation. They accept Jesus the Jew while they reject Christ the Christian. They hear one speak of the universal faith and ethic of Judaism and they ask: "How does one become a Jew?" By this they mean: "How can I enter this kingdom?" When shall we have the vision and courage to hand them the key?

PROMENADE

DAVID IGNATOW

His head split in four parts,
he walks down the street--pleasant
with shady trees and a sun softened
by leaves touching it. He walks,
a revolving turret for a head
from each slit of which he looks guardedly:
the enemy approaches or he approaches
the enemy. At any moment the chatter of differences
will break out; the four parts of his skull
revolve slowly, seeking the time.

In there they do not know of each other,
sealed off by steel walls. They are safer
together singly and apart; and shouting,
angry or in pain, have only themselves to listen;
while overhead, ignored in the walk,
are the leaves touching each other and the sun.

DAVID IGNATOW'S *Poems* was recently published by the Decker Press. Mr. Ignatow was born in Brooklyn in 1914 and attended Columbia University, Brooklyn College, and the New School for Social Research. He has contributed poetry to a number of periodicals.

THE STUDY OF MAN

THE FRENCH TURN TO PSYCHOANALYSIS

Freud Breaches Reason's Citadel

SHERRY MANGAN

PARIS

A REMARKABLE phenomenon about France has for several decades passed relatively unnoticed, save by the practitioners of psychoanalysis themselves. With the highest reputation for hospitality to advanced ideas and the greatest tolerance concerning sexual matters, that country, alone of the advanced Western nations, stubbornly rejected the new branch of medicine and its accent on sexuality. An anti-Freudian sociologist might reply offhand that there are no grounds for astonishment here: the freedom with which the French treat sex relieves them of many of the problems that call for psychoanalysis in other countries.

The answer is apt but it overlooks certain new facts. French psychoanalysis today is overwhelmed by patients; and the existing analysts are worked to a frazzle trying to cope with the flood of medical students and practicing physicians wanting to undergo training analyses prior to becoming analysts themselves. Yet French *moeurs* have not visibly changed in the direction of puritanism. There must be other reasons why that nation which used merrily to quote that "the chains of marriage are so heavy that it takes three to bear them" now seems to need a fourth in the person of the psychoanalyst.

But, first, why was France so resistant till now? Of the previous resistance itself there is no question. In Freud's own *History of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (1914) he complains: "Of the European countries, France has so far shown herself the least receptive . . ."; and Jankélévitch, translator of the first of Freud's books to appear in French, in 1921, prefaces it: "Psychoanalysis, which for over twenty years has produced impassioned discussions and an abundant literature in German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon countries, was until a few months ago known in France only by hearsay, and the majority of those who risked speaking of it at all thought it smart to make fun of it. . . ." Despite courageous pioneering by such practitioners as Allendy, Hesnard, Laforgue, Moricheau-Beauchant, Régis, and Sokolnicka, and such publishers as Payot, and Denoël and Steele, French resistance—by doctors, intellectuals, and the general public, each from varying causes—was still monumental ten and even fifteen years later.

For psychologists and the medical profession generally, this resistance to psychoanalysis was mostly a phenomenon of uneven historical development. The advance of knowledge has frequently had a way of proceeding by national spurts; and that nation which has headed the procession has often resisted recognizing the validity of another nation's bid for leadership. France took up experimental psychology later than Germany, Britain, the United States, and

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FRANCE, the country of reason and clarity, has always been cool to psychoanalysis, the science of the unreasonable. But recently there has been a turnabout, and the doctrines of Freud have been adopted with all the intensity characteristic of French intellectual life. SHERRY MANGAN here tries to trace the social and political causes for this minor revolution in the French cultural climate. Mr. Mangan has lived in Paris since 1925, and was until recently a correspondent for *Time*. His article "The French Intellectual Merry-Go-Round" appeared in the June COMMENTARY. He was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1904.

Austria; but when it did, it made a fresh start and a tremendous spurt forward under such brilliant leaders as Charcot, Ribot, Binet, and Janet, and worked out a general system far superior to the then accepted German school of Wundt.

By 1889 it had definitely turned its back on the tedious eclectic and metaphysical views which had previously passed for "psychology" in France, and had plunged into laboratory experiment, in which Binet particularly excelled. Ribot defined his method as "studying psychological facts from without, not from within; in the material facts into which they are translated, not in the consciousness which gives birth to them." Janet's publications on neuroses between 1889 and 1903 were unquestionably the most brilliant of their kind in that time. Well before World War I, psychology in France was characteristically a crystallized "system" in which the French had, as it were, a vested interest. Upstart foreigners were ill-viewed.

Such was French psychology's prestige, indeed, that it was an early and determinant influence on Freud himself. In 1885 he spent a year in Paris studying under the master Charcot and translating his works; and thenafter went to Nancy to examine the advanced methods of Liébault and Bernheim. But he did not stop there: using this merely as a point of departure, he went on to develop the medical discipline called psychoanalysis, which by the turn of the century was sufficiently established to return and knock on the door of the dominant French school. Its reception was, and remained, cold and unfriendly.

The first three decades of this century were a highly nationalistic period in France, and even science, alas, is not always above national prejudices. Thus, as for Viennese psychoanalysis, even if it were good, the French wouldn't like it. But beyond this, they honestly thought psychoanalysis a step backward. Though in their philosophical approach Ribot and Janet were swept along by the idealist reaction in philosophy (and Bergson was significantly their pupil), in their techniques they were materialists, and considered Freud's "consulting-room" technique a scientific retreat from laboratory methods. And they could equally ill bear the fact that in its early stages this technique was of necessity empirical as compared to their Gallically logical "systems."

Thus the body of French doctors closed their minds. The intelligent layman was further prejudiced by two secondary contributory factors. To the French, notoriously conservative linguistically, Freudian scientific terminology sounded like gobbledygook. For it must not be forgotten that the Gallic nation, with its incomprehensibly academic refusal to permit neologisms, foreign terms, its own genial slang, and even correctly formed paronymous derivatives (characteristically called "barbarisms" in France) to enrich its literary and scientific language as English has been enriched, has made of French an extremely beautiful dead language rather like ancient Greek. These bearded prejudices were so strong that, for example, Allendy and Laforgue in their early *Psychoanalyse et Névroses* had to write a special preface and Gallicize Freud's terminology to try to overcome them. The situation was further complicated by the fact that, since the first serious books on psychoanalysis for the layman did not appear in France till about 1935, the first that most intellectuals heard of Freud was from the Surrealists. And however great Surrealism's artistic achievements may have been, it was hardly the most indicated spokesman for persuading the average intellectual that the basis of the new science of psychoanalysis was rational and materialist.

Such intellectuals were above all prejudiced, through either this source or another, by a total misunderstanding of the methodology of psychoanalysis. They got it firmly in their brilliantly agitated heads that psychoanalysis was irrational. And in France that is a fighting word. What one may roughly call the Cartesian tradition has been the great methodological stumbling block in the French effort to understand psychoanalysis. Rationalism to most Frenchmen turns out to mean: formalism in logic, systematization in method, and the preeminence of reason in psychology.

French language and reasoning are neatly summarized by Buffon's *"Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français* (What's not clear, is not French)." But by "clear" they seem to mean merely transparent, easily definable, uncontradictory: hence their passion for formal logic and their instinctive incapacity to understand Hegelian or other dialectics. "A door," they like to quote, "is open or it is shut." So it is not surprising that they threw up their hands at such a Freudian fundamental as ambivalence, let alone psychoanalysis' whole dynamics of non-commonsense contradictions.

Pragmatism is another *bête noire* to the average French intellectual. It caused France to disregard almost totally such figures as John Stuart Mill and William James at the height of their world fame. Verifiable results rarely interest the French as much as their classification in systems, those "monuments of reasoning." It would be harsh but not unjust to call them a nation of philosophers. Hence Freudianism, which seeks above all results and is not a philosophy (any philosophy in its current practice being contraband smuggled in by bad practitioners), seemed to them suspect.

A third characteristic of French culture is its belief—or hope—that man is increasingly controlled by reason and logic. The Cartesian tradition distinguished man from other animals by that faculty, and held all else in man to be animal, mechanical. The dominant school of psychology was one of pure rationalism. To such minds the idea that emotional drives can *control* and *deform* reason is a particularly distasteful one. And thought that is not visibly purposive and rational always seems to them suspect: perhaps the most frequent and sharpest admonition one hears French mothers shout to their children when they are absent-minded is: "*Ne rêve pas!* (Don't dream!)." Even the Romantic, and later the Bergsonian, revolts against reason's predominance were only the other side of this same coin—nothing, for example, could be more antithetical to Bergsonian idealism, with its tendency to wobble off into mysticism, than materialist psychoanalysis.

It is singular how crass was the widespread French belief that psychoanalytic method is irrational. What in fact is irrational about psychoanalysis, as the late Otto Fenichel stated with unimprovable brevity in his classic *Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis,* is not the method but the subject matter.

A THIRD factor of resistance was the fact that France was predominantly a Catholic country. Not, as might be supposed, because the Gallic Church thundered openly against psychoanalysis as a heresy. From former sad experiences, the French episcopate has learned not to engage in frontal fights with science, but to use the science-religion dichotomy on a render-unto-Caesar bias. Medically, it left all indisputably somatic matters to mechanist-minded physicians in order the better to claim the province of the "soul." Hence, faced with Freudianism, it has been far more prudent than the Hiberno-American Church, and there has occurred in France no such incident as Monsignor Sheen's obscurantist attack in 1947 on the distinguished Catholic analyst Dr. Frank J. Curran.

But the Gallic Church watched warily a therapy that made confession constructive and treated God as an interesting symptomatic concept which it neither supported nor opposed; and the episcopate gave it neither welcome nor encouragement. The appearance in the late 20's of Freud's *The Future of an Illusion,* hardly a work of piety, doubtless jarred it severely; and by then the new science seemed to have got a stubborn toe-hold in France. Yet the Gallic Church proceeded, as in other matters, to absorb as much as possible of what it could not eliminate. Hence France now rejoices in numerous Catholic analysts and even a priest-analyst—not surprisingly, he is a Jesuit.

Thus it was less the opposition of the episcopate than the existence of confession that was the main religious factor in hindering the greater acceptance of psychoanalysis. And this in two ways. There can be little doubt that the function of the confessional as a periodic safety-valve for intolerable feelings of guilt lowered the whole defensive struggle to a bearable level for thousands of devout and neurotic Catholics. The anti-clericals provided the other side of the medallion: after a century of fighting the Church and its confessional, they regarded with a particularly fishy eye an esoteric therapy centered round a confessional technique. Thus, psychoanalysis attracted opposition from both sides.

ALL the foregoing reasons, however, are but minor compared to the fundamental causes of the French lack of interest in psychoanalysis: their national *moeurs* and temperament.

In all countries there are, roughly, three moralities: (1) the official morality embalmed in laws, religion, education, and public declarations; (2) the real morality as practiced in private; and (3) the generally accepted compromise somewhere between these two extremes —which constitutes, so to speak, the country's moral atmosphere, puritanical the more it approaches the first, tolerant the more it approaches the second. France has long had the well-merited reputation of being the most tolerant country in the Western world. Even during the Victorian period, when in other lands puritanism reached an apex, France tolerantly accepted open or hidden double sex life—a social ambience strengthened by its literature and theater. And save in a minority of exceptionally severe families, infantile masturbation was not treated by the French with the melodramatic hullabaloo of horrendous threats that in other cultures has deformed so many lives.

Janet sensed this, but got it amazingly upside-down. He had the disarming gall to assert that "psychoanalysis could have originated only in a city like Vienna, with its atmosphere of sensuality and immorality not to be found in other cities." This from a Parisian! Freud dryly commented: "If the assumptions had been of the opposite kind, we might be inclined to listen." But even if he got it by the wrong end, Janet had grabbed the right stick. It is no accident that psychoanalysis originated in a certain city at a certain time, and that its main developer and the majority of his followers were Jews.* And it is equally no accident that the French, less heavily laden than Anglo-Saxon and Germanic nations with intolerable guilt feelings consequent on the conflicts between their instinctual drives and their country's publicly accepted mores, felt no need of therapy to rid them of that guilt.

Reinforcing the mores is the important factor of national temperament, and its expression in personal independence and a live-and-let-live attitude. "*Fais ce que vouldras* (Do what you want)" Rabelais proclaimed as the *summum* of wisdom. He could have saved his breath: the French always have and always will. It is possible in Paris to wander past the cafés on a Sunday afternoon in Indian chief's regalia, complete with war paint, with hardly a glance from the terrace sitters. More importantly, tics, phobias, hypochrondrias, compulsive rituals, perversions, manic excitations, depressive glumnesses all pass, if not unnoticed, at least uninterfered with. Anyone has a right, the French feel, to his moods, his *manies,* and his eccentricities.

There thus becomes immediately apparent a sharp contrast with the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon countries, where there is an all-pervasive social pressure, whose strength it is impossible to exaggerate, toward *conformity:* the norm to be conformed to varies, but the pressure to conformism is unrelenting. And it is all too sadly effective: deviations from socially accepted behavior lead to widespread introspection and inner anxiety, and have to be constantly explained and justified to other people. There grows a constant uncertainty and anxiety about one's own behavior. The French think this a huge joke, and adore the inverted greeting they attribute to one New York analyst meeting another on Park Avenue: "You're fine, thanks. How am I?" Where the "maladjusted" German or Anglo-Saxon was drawn to the analyst's office, the Frenchman of the first three decades of the century could live in peace with his neurosis or character disturbance, since his acquaintances were neither surprised nor offended by it and didn't chivy him on the subject. On the contrary, excessive normality of behavior seemed in itself suspect and undesirable; and there is the true story of a young woman on whom psychoanalysis was urged to correct pronounced infantilisms of behavior; she refused, assuming that if she were successfully analyzed she'd "be able to make love only one way, which would render life intolerably dull."

Foreigners have for years understandably thrown up their hands in hopeless exasperation before the general indiscipline and *pagaïe* ("snafu") of French life, with the exclamation, "They're all crazy!" So they are, a bit; what we overlook is the fact that they like it that way. Jean Cocteau could recently complain in an interview on his return from New York that Americans were always on time for appointments, and he sighed with relief at regaining "*notre cher désordre parisien* (our dear Parisian disorder)." The French indeed have their own word for it. "We are not," they like to say complacently, "*grégaires,* like you other peoples." *Grégaire* turns out to mean, not gregarious in the English sense, but socially conscious in the sense of giving at least half a damn what anyone thinks of your behavior. Yet justice obliges one to add that the French tradition of tolerance and non-interference has permitted individuals of neurotic tendencies but high intelligence to develop what psychoanalysis calls "compensations" and "secondary gains" to an extent unequalled in other cultures.

SUCH then appear to be the main reasons why France was so slow to accept psychoanalysis.

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*A joke current in Britain in the 30's ran: "Patient: 'Why are you the analyst and I the patient, after all?' Analyst: 'Because I had the luck to be *born* a Viennese Jew, whereas you have to learn how.' "

And it was slow. In 1913 Hesnard, Moricheau-Beauchant, and Régis were distinctly voices crying in the desert. Though in 1921 the first serious works began to be published, and Sokolnicka, Allendy, and Laforgue started their stubborn struggle, progress in the 20's dragged, and it was not till the mid-30's that the tide definitively turned. From then till the war's outbreak the rhythm of growth spurted. During the occupation French psychoanalysis had to stop or go underground, since it was anathema to the Nazis.* But with the Liberation there burst out a boom that has all but overwhelmed France. One statistic will suffice: applications from students and physicians for training analyses in preparation for practice have jumped from five per *year* before the war to five per *week* today, and the training committee of the Society of Psychoanalysts thus has its pick of high-caliber students. The universities are beginning to give official recognition: chairs in psychoanalysis have been established at the Sorbonne and Strasbourg. Something has certainly happened.

Is it because any or all of the causes of the long resistance of the French to Freud's ideas have been spectacularly reversed?

Hardly. Doctors are, it is true, flocking to the new branch, but they are very few compared to the medical corps as a whole, which continues to regard Freudianism with great reservations. The work of popularization has made some progress since 1935, but nothing like that in the United States. French intellectuals generally have recovered neither from their strange notion that psychoanalytic method is irrational, nor from the limitations of their neo-Cartesianism. The influence of the Church and the practice of confession have not visibly diminished—rather the contrary if anything. French *moeurs* have not become suddenly Calvinistic: no one is refused entry into France for "moral turpitude"; having a mistress does not unfit a man to hold office or practice a profession; and even the closing of the houses of prostitution was motivated by a crisis of housing rather than conscience. Though political polarization has shortened tempers and personalized polemics, the national temperament of tolerance and non-interference is not fundamentally changed. And if there are social pressures, they are at least multiple and mutually contradictory. As for individualism and *pagaïe*, one trip through Paris traffic or to a government bureau will demonstrate that the French are in no immediate danger of voluntary regimentation.

It thus seems probable, if the causes of the previous resistance to analysis have not been reversed, that new causes for acceptance have arisen and overcome them. An intimation of what these may be can be gained from a significant passage in an essay by Dr. Franz Alexander ("Present Trends in Psychiatry and the Future Outlook," in *Studies in Psychosomatic Medicine,* New York, Ronald, 1948): ". . . there can be no doubt that the extreme sexual repression of the Victorian era was responsible for the prominent role which Freud attributed to sexuality in the causation of neuroses. Sexuality acquired this significant role not because of some basic biological reasons, but because of the repressive method of handling its manifestations within the family and in public life during the Victorian period.

"In our present days another nuclear emotional conflict stands out. It centers around emotional insecurity, a conflict between competitive ambition and stress upon individual accomplishment, and a deep longing for dependence and security. The ideals of individual initiative, endurance, and self-reliance, and of an adventurous enterprising spirit . . . are still alive, but their successful realization is becoming more and more difficult in our present complex interdependent society in which mammoth corporations, on the one hand, and the all-powerful trade unions, on the other, are desperately combatting the great impersonal demons of our times: the inexorable laws of the business cycle and unemployment. This social atmosphere is the ideal breeding place of insecurity and the longing for dependence, both attitudes so diametrically opposed to the traditional love of freedom of spirit and action. And thus we recognize the central neurotic conflict of our present days—the conflict between individualistic ideals and a longing for order, security, and dependence. . . .

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*Psychoanalysis, like politics, makes strange bedfellows. The third in the anti-Freudian coalition, beside the Hiberno-American Church and Nazism, is Stalinism. French Communist and fellow-traveling papers have lately been deafening everyone with diatribes, whose evasion of facts is equalled only by their excess of violence, against psychoanalysis as an "ideology of low police and espionage." Furthermore, these spokesmen thunder, there is no difference between "good" and "bad" psychoanalysis: it is all merely a weapon of "American imperialism." This last precision is for the benefit of the numerous Stalinist analysts, who are beginning to look a little neurotic around the edges.

"Fears and hostilities, frustrations and thwarted hopes, exaggerated ambitions and discouragement may lead to mental and nervous symptoms or to disturbed human relations."

Though written primarily about America, Alexander's words, as applied to France, are very revealing. The fact that Victorian repressive methods toward sexual manifestations were never much practiced in France apparently saved that country from the widespread hysterical syndromes that plagued less liberal lands and made so much work for the analysts therein. But what of those neuroses and character disorders centered around fears, aggressions, frustrations, and above all insecurity, which Alexander terms "the central neurotic conflict" of our times? Has there been a change in the objective conditions of living in France that parallels the country's changing attitude to psychoanalysis?

With the exception of the spirit of *revanche* toward Germany left over from the 1870 defeat, the French mentality from 1900 to 1914 was characterized by general contentment and the sublime confidence that French civilization was a fine and finished product. For case histories one need only consult certain of Anatole France's novels. In a state of bourgeois self-satisfaction reinforced by economic stability and the rationalist tradition, the typical Frenchman lived with a profound sense of security, seeing his country as the center of culture, confident of its values, enjoying its pleasant life. It was symptomatically unusual for him to travel outside France: *"On est tellement bien ici, quoi* (It's so nice here)." He was, it is true, politely hospitable to many foreign ideas, but only as an intellectual exercise and to the extent that they could be neatly incorporated in his own systems. World War I was unquestionably a severe emotional shock, yet France won it and, despite considerable human and material destruction and a sharp currency devaluation, her postwar adjustment was smoother than in most other combatant countries. The 20's were prosperous and gay, and the average Frenchman's conviction that he lived in the world's most desirable country was confirmed this time by a tourist flood tremendous enough to balance the huge foreign-trade deficit.

But with 1931 all began to change with nightmare speed. France faced: a severe economic depression with mass unemployment, exacerbated by a deliberately deflationary policy; constant political tension, highlighted by such events as the fascist riots in the Place de la Concorde in 1934 and the revolutionary strikes of 1936; the mounting certainty of war, reaching a nerve-shattering peak in the 1938 Munich crisis; the war itself, with the nightmare exodus and the crushing defeat; the privations and dangers of the interminable German occupation, as dreary as it was murderous, and the smoldering civil war of the Resistance; the sharp disappointment that the privations did not end with the long-awaited "Liberation" but were aggravated by inflation; political polarization in which a weak centrist government sits uneasily on the lid of a potential civil war; and above all the horrible certainty, as the United States and Russia provoke each other, of another war to end, not wars, but civilization itself, with France as a principal battlefield.

Under increasing tension, with their sense of security utterly undermined, all their values brought into question, more and more French fell prey to anxieties, fears, rages, hostilities, guilts, and obsessions. Difficult and often intolerable objective conditions remobilized hitherto controllable neurotic conflicts arising from childhood; and the neurotic behavior of such parents toward their children inevitably created neurotic tendencies in the latter. It is not surprising that more and more French individuals are breaking down, feel that they "cannot go on," and turn to the psychoanalyst. The most frequent type of case coming for treatment, according to one distinguished French analyst, is the character disturbance signalized by breakdown in adaptation, an incapacity any longer to face daily life and its insoluble problems.

IT would thus seem that in digging out the real reason for the surprising reversal of France's attitude toward psychoanalysis, we are touching on a phenomenon whose significance far transcends the limits of French culture: the increasing predominance of the sociological and economic factor in mental health. For though the deep original conflicts predisposing to the central neuroses of today lie as ever in the oral, anal, and genital stages of infancy, the inciting external factors that aggravate them to the point of full neurotic breakdown are visibly sociological and economic.

Once, therefore, the problem of Victorian repressions and the resultant hysterical syndromes are cleared away as only minimally applicable to French culture, France is seen to differ now from the rest of the Western world not in kind but in degree: instability is greater, contradictions sharper, confusion more confounded. And to the extent that the tradition of individualistic independence was most intense in France, the relatively helpless situation of the individual in our vast industrial societies has struck the harder against the Frenchman's sense of security and all the ideals which his education had inculcated. One important part of this nexus of new problems is well summarized by Fenichel in the work already cited: "Historically the authoritarian type of ideal was unopposed in feudalism; the subjects actually were provided for if they renounced their independence, and the mental readiness of the majority of people to accept such dependence was needed in order to preserve society. Rising capitalism brought the opposite ideal. Free competition needed the new ideals of liberty and equality. The subsequent development of capitalism, however, not only created anew a majority of people who had to be kept contented in relative frustration and dependency, but economic contradictions made the entire society unstable to such a degree that, with the disappearance of free competition, authoritarian necessities also appeared again. At the same time everybody feels endangered in any attempt to get solidly established—and even in his very existence; this makes the single individual's activities hopeless, and thus regressive longings for passive-receptive regulation come to the fore again. . . ."

Politically, such psychological predispositions give food for not particularly pleasant thought. Economically, Fenichel's remarks much illuminate the emotional conflicts aroused by what it seems increasingly sardonic to call "free enterprise." The whole economic trend from artisanal manufacture through medium-sized factories to the rationalized monopoly corporation has aggravated severely the already difficult enough mental conflicts of the man conditioned to the ideal of himself as a successful independent operator. He is supposed to show qualities of aggressiveness within socially permitted limits by engaging in business rivalries in which his success means someone else's failure (and resentment), and to use methods and practices whose morality, if he is to be successful, are in conflict with a whole series of other moral values he has been simultaneously taught. This was hard enough fifty years ago, but today the individual's success is so unlikely and the struggle takes place against a background of such terrifying uncertainty that his instinct is more and more to abandon the uneven and dangerous fight and to seek refuge by collapse into the paternalistic arms of the all-enveloping monopoly corporation or state. In France, where the tradition of small business has long been a national ideal, this universal situation is, naturally, especially acute.

France is, furthermore, full of hate today. The new irritability of the postwar French that has so startled American tourists is only the superficial surface symptom of internal tensions of intolerable rage and hostility. With Gaullists and Communists at one another's throats, one senses that minds are full of murder. It occurs occasionally in Paris that one witnesses a verbal "acting-out" under the release of alcohol, and the violence is something that must be heard to be believed. The stenographic record of the recent Kravchenko damage suit is peppered with the most amazingly overt threats of eventual assassination. On the other hand, those who fear their own aggressiveness and turn it inward react into paralyzing fears and uncertainty; and it is no accident that thousands of Frenchmen have turned in fear and hope to the well-meaning pacifism of the Garry Davis movement as a supposed shield against the universally sensed forces of hatred and war.

THESE are only a few of the manifold aspects of an immensely complicated situation that I do not pretend to cover, much less exhaust. But they suffice to give the clue to what is happening to French mental health. Elsewhere in the work mentioned above, Fenichel makes the following fundamental statement: "Neuroses are the outcome of unfavorable and socially determined educational measures, corresponding to a given and historically determined social milieu and necessary in this milieu. They cannot be changed without corresponding change in the milieu." In France today the old milieu is in process of violent disintegration without as yet the guarantee of the establishment of a new and healthier one. Without the creation of that new milieu, the incidence of neuroses, psychoses, and character disturbances will inevitably rise. And with the failure to establish a more humane social system, the boom in psychoanalysis bids fair to accelerate.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Books for Jewish Children

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read with pleasure Isa Kapp's refreshing and provocative article on "Books for Jewish Children" in your December issue. But is she not attacking a condition rather than a point of view?

I am not prepared to quote examples, but a talented writer for children, born to the English language, is unlikely, even though a Jew, to prefer the Jewish field, limited as it is in every aspect. Much of the world's great literature for children is folklore, acceptable and even the more delightful to children of other nations. But Jewish folklore, as it exists in English, is basically religious and nationalistic, in its essence rejecting other nations, and therefore rejected by them.

The field of writing for Jewish children in English has thus been left to writers of talent who by some quirk of feeling or circumstance have felt more at home in it. These being very few, the work has gone by default to persons who are actually educators and religionists, first and last. Those with the ability to put their precepts in the form of consequent sentences were encouraged to do so, and the results, judged by adults of similar purpose, were called books for children, and published as such.

The children were not consulted. The only way they could express their views was by either reading or not reading with interest. I remember the astonishment of a Hebrew school teacher as she told me, "Why, my little banditten are taking your book home to read!" And this was history, no less (*American Promise*). She wasn't used to not having to beat the children over the head with a book (metaphorically, of course!). A good step, by the way, in the correction of this situation, is the publication of such a book as *Mickey Marcus,* written by young highschool girls in a simple and realistic style; its literary level is, however, no better than journalistic.

Possibly the establishment of Israel will bring about a reversal. Instead of appearing in English, to be translated into Hebrew, the great books will be written in Hebrew and translated for our children here. Then we shall have the pure folklore, the language with tang and truth, the stories that grow out of the earth and the people thereof, and there will be a great Jewish literature for children.

Sulamith Ish Kishor

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I found Miss Kapp's article on "Books for Jewish Children" highly stimulating and—since my sister Sulamith and I are let off so easy and even given a critical accolade—I'm sure I enjoyed it.

However, where so few are found worthy of praise, it seems to me a great pity that Miss Kapp omits all mention of Elma E. Levinger, who is the pioneer in this field, and through whose example Sulamith and I found an easy path into juvenile writing.

In your editorial footnote you pose the question whether books put out for Jewish children do not "stress Jewish uniqueness (or Israeli prowess) so much as to separate and estrange Jewish children from the common American life?" If anyone has worked to make the Jewish youngster feel at home in America and at one with America's traditions, it is my friend Mrs. Levinger. Her two books of stories on the part Jews have played in the history of our country have been recently condensed into one volume, *The Golden Door* (Bloch), and I still can't read "A Place of Refuge" (the tale about Roger Williams) without being moved to tears, so touching is the synthesis of symbolic fact and feeling.

My brother Gideon read Mrs. Levinger's earliest book, *The Boy Who Fit In,* at the age of fourteen, and was "crazy about it." Now that he is a sapient literary agent, and after I shouldn't like to tell how many years, he recently reread the book and thinks no less of it. Moreover, she is still writing, her latest works being *Fighting Angel,* the story, Henrietta Szold (Behrman House), and *Albert Einstein* (Julian Messner).

I hope Miss Kapp will pardon me for saying that one cannot fully discuss what has been and is being written for Jewish children without some few words about their loyal and skillful entertainer, Elma Ehrlich Levinger.

Judith Ish Kishor

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I can agree with most of what Miss Kapp has to say about the didactic approach of the authors and the books she mentions, but I regret the over-sensitiveness and super-critical attitude towards the term "Jewish."

Yes, there is "anxious concern" among Jewish parents to bring up their children as Jews, and to train them in a Jewish way of life, and . . . they welcome the help of visual aids, of holiday celebrations, of community experience, and, certainly, the aid of literature, of newspapers, magazines, and books. Writing stories for children requires special aptitudes and experience. Not all those who have tried to write are experts. They have tried to fill a need. That even a few have succeeded, in the opinion of Miss Kapp, is an excellent tribute to their efforts. To compare the efforts of these tyros with those of Kipling, Andersen, the Grimms, and Milne, is like comparing classic literature with the literary products of college freshmen. It is easy to find fault, but it would be more gracious and more constructive to encourage more writing of Jewish literature for children by able, inspired, and Jewishly conscious authors. . . . To the extent that Miss Kapp emphasizes the need to understand the child's mind, his world and his ways, and to the extent that she demands good literature, she is helpful to authors of future juvenile literature. But to the extent that she finds Jewish motivation and Jewish content a source of interference with the writing of good literature, she discourages authors from attempting to create Jewish literature for children.

Moreover, her opinions seem to betray a prejudiced tendency towards a universalism which, while it does not deny the existence of Jewishness in the child, would nevertheless avoid making him aware of it. She speaks of the child's "reaching his adult Jewishness on terms suited to his own nature and to Jewish tradition itself." Can a child reach adult Jewishness naturally without first passing through child Jewishness?

Miss Kapp cautions against identifying Jewishness with "abstract goodness," which can be presented best in its "realistic contexts and proportions" as they exist in the world. While Jewishness and abstract goodness may not be identifiable, are the good and evil of Jewish characters in the Bible less realistic than those in Grimm's fairy tales? . . .

Again, does Miss Kapp know that the vast majority of Jewish children in America, their parents, and their teachers, spend most of their lives absorbed in the facts and interests of the American people? Does she realize that the religious (or Jewish) values which these children and adults have inherited and seek to develop for themselves, are liberalizing and universalizing influences in their own lives and in American civilization?

Some answer to these questions is perhaps to be found in the editorial comments introducing the article. The editorial commentator asks: "Can [books for Jewish children] be counted on to make our youngsters conscious, self-respecting Jews? Or, others ask, do they stress Jewish uniqueness (or Israeli prowess) so much as to separate and estrange Jewish children from the common American life?" This editorial comment to all appearances seems balanced and unbiased. Is it really so? Note the gratuitous contrast between "self-respecting Jew" and "Jewish uniqueness" which is equated with "Israeli prowess."

To all this, I should like to add: One understands that there is no anti-Jewish or anti-Israel bias in Commentary. For is it not published by the American Jewish Committee, which is pro-Israel and in favor of Jewish culture in America?

What, then, is the opinion of the editor concerning the attitude of the AJC? Would he call it "self-respecting" or "unique"?

Israel S. Chipkin

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Any sensitive reader will grant that the Jewish children's books Miss Kapp lists are not great specimens of English literature. And they make no such pretense! They are unashamedly Jewish in content, revolving around the Sabbath and holiday themes—and why not? There is plenty of reading material available about the mechanical and scientific world we live in. Children's libraries abound with Runaway Trains, Farmer Smalls, Little Aviators, Mike Mulligans and their Steam Shovels, Tug Boats, and Little Rabbits who do or do not eat their carrots! One looks hard and long to find a classic among them. Classics are not written every day. . . . And the books of Jewish interest offend no more against the English language than do the others. These books are new on the American Jewish scene and reveal a growing awareness of the part literature for the young child can play in stimulating observance of the Sabbath and the holidays as days of joy. Why shouldn't Jews take pleasure in that which is theirs? . . .

I'm not surprised that Miss Kapp finds Leo and Hulda's ecstatic greeting "A lulov and esrog for Sukkos!" in Rose Golub's *Down Holiday Lane* quite ridiculous. It reflects her negative attitude toward things Jewish. She finds the excitement and joy unbelievable, and must add: "as if they had been given a chemistry set or a 42nd Street turtle." I can say that I have observed such excitement around the esrog and the lulov in my sons (I have three) and they are as American as a football game on Thanksgiving Day. And, too, they are as Jewish as a Sabbath candle (and *I* think as luminous!). . . .

I should like to record a conversation I had with my oldest son, Joel Isaac, who recently became nine and is in the fifth grade. He does not go to a progressive school. I submit this as an antidote to the incident from real life which Miss Kapp recorded as relevant.

Q: Say, if you had to choose between a lulov and esrog and a chemistry set, which would you choose?

A: A chemistry set, of course! It's more sensible because I'd have it all the time. I'd make all kinds of experiments with it. The lulov and esrog I'd have only Sukkos time. . . . But gee! I'd feel bad if I didn't have a lulov and esrog on Sukkos! Couldn't I have both?

Q: Yes, sure you could. If you had to choose between a dreidel or a football, which would you choose?

A: A football—! What kind of silly question is that! You know how much I like football! I play almost all year except when the snow is on the ground. Although, when Hanukkah comes, the dreidel is fun 'cause you have to play inside. I honestly and truly would like to have both of them. Why can't I?

Q: You can, son. You can have both the football and the dreidel. Do you remember the story of K'ton-ton and the runaway dreidel? Did you like that?

A: Sure. I liked K'ton-ton. He was cute and always getting into trouble.

Q: Do you remember how I used to read you all the stories about the Jewish holidays before you could read yourself? Do you think you got anything out of it? Do you think the holidays mean anything to you?

A: Sure they do. Sure I remember those stories. Every year I had something to look forward to. I got out of school. And each holiday has its symbol.

Q: Symbol? What's that?

A: It's something that stands for it—like a menorah for Hanukkah.

Q: What do these symbols mean to you? Why bother with them?

A: I don't know. I like them. I guess it's because I'm a Jew. And they are everyday things with me.

This interview sums up my argument that these books serve a purpose, and, incidentally, refutes Miss Kapp's contention that "even at twelve the child is not yet a Jew. . . ." If a child of nine can say, "These are everyday things with me," he knows what he is.

PEARL F. BRAUDE

Providence, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The position taken in Isa Kapp's article on "Books for Jewish Children" seems to me eminently sound. Our school work until recently has been well-nigh ruined by the inability of teachers to respect the personality of childhood, or even to understand what these words properly mean. If we expect to educate children, we have to start, first, with each as an individual, and, second, to take him as he is and get him to work at the most promising activity to which he can give his whole soul. If we manage him year after year on this basis, then he will grow up into a well-balanced and well-prepared individual.

That, I take it, is the insight of Isa Kapp.

WILLIAM H. KILPATRICK

New York City

Raising Musical Standards

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In Chemjo Vinaver's article in the January issue of your magazine, he assumes that Dr. Gradenwitz shared in the editorial policy of *Jewish Music Notes*, June 1949 issue, since his name appeared among the paper's contributing editors.

Dr. Gradenwitz is in Israel and has acted only as our Israeli correspondent with no responsibility for any of the content of our paper other than news of music in Israel. I should like to absolve Dr. Gradenwitz of any responsibility for our editorial policy.

As to Mr. Vinaver's statements, quoting from the chairman's message in the aforesaid issue of *Jewish Music Notes*, he resorts to an old trick of quoting only those excerpts which serve his purpose. Had he quoted the following as well —"It is regrettable that on the whole the level of mass appreciation for Jewish music is somewhat low. . . . The National Jewish Music Council has taken the educator's position that one begins with what is at hand, always keeping in mind ultimate goals. . . . The desire to listen to the symphony presupposes a high musical quotient. . . . To broaden and elevate the musical taste of Jewish masses, time and patience and conscientious day to day application toward the achievement of goals are required. . . ."—the reader of Mr. Vinaver's article might have understood that the National Jewish Music Council is as aware as COMMENTARY of the problem inherent in raising standards. The National Jewish Music Council is confident it will eventually succeed in its purposes through its methods.

ETHEL S. COHEN

National Jewish Music Council
New York City

Mr. Vinaver Replies

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mrs. Cohen's rather weak reaction to my article seems to me to miss the bus on both points she is trying to make. I find especially curious her eagerness to absolve Dr. Gradenwitz of a responsibility of which he was not accused, as any careful reader of my article can plainly see. I wrote: "One wonders what Dr. Gradenwitz thinks of the following artistic credo. . . ."; and in addition: "I hope [Dr. Gradenwitz] too was shocked when he read the statement. . . ."—the unmistakable implication being that he learned of it only when reading it and had no share in making it. It is one thing to be a contributing editor, and another to make editorial policy.

As to the quotation from *Jewish Music Notes:* Mrs. Cohen accuses me of resorting to "an old trick" because I did not mention the quotation she submits in her letter. I am not in the habit of using "tricks," old or new. I quoted, of course, what aroused my strongest objection. No additional excerpts can undo a statement like this one: ". . . if the latest 'hit parade' tune is an indication of American mass musical taste, perhaps strictures against taste in Jewish music need not be so harsh. . . . If Jewish masses prefer certain songs of a rather low musical caliber . . . it is because the songs are familiar and warm and elicit an immediate emotional response." Mrs. Cohen's additional quotations serve merely to show her hand and strengthen my position further.

Taken as a whole, her statement is an excellent illustration of the very point I made in the article—the futility of high-sounding resolutions and the urgency of a revolutionary change in communal and organizational practice with regard to Jewish music. In theory, the Chairman of the National Jewish Music Council agrees with my demand for higher standards. But when it comes to putting the ideals into practice, she finds it expedient to begin "with what is at hand."

And what is at hand?—there's the rub. There is no excuse for resorting to low-caliber music. Good Jewish music—both in the folk and art idioms—is available, if one knows where to look for it. Thus far, the NJMC has little reason to be "confident it will eventually succeed . . . through its methods." Those methods have laid too much stress on quantity, too little on quality: "One thousand national groups participating in Jewish Music Month." Art is not made with statistics.

Jewish music should be publicly represented either by programs that possess intrinsic worth or not at all. Unfortunately, this is not the case today, regardless of statistics, and people of finer tastes justifiably reject most of what is offered them. Why not have "merely" one hundred such events—but each of them significant and inspiring? This is the only dignified and ultimately efficacious method.

Chemjo Vinaver

New York City

Psychological Roots of Ritual

To the Editor of Commentary:

Permit me to break a lance in favor of Mr. Rosenfeld, whose article, "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street" [October 1949], received such a sad drubbing in your letters section. Mr. Rosenfeld said: "It is hard to see how anyone could doubt the unconscious sexual quality of the *milchigs-fleishigs* ban in the minds of those who observe it. Otherwise how account for the zeal with which the law dividing *milchigs* from *fleishigs* is upheld by the faithful, and for their explosion into virtual terror at the least infringement? No one takes mere food so seriously." The letters in reply to his article demonstrate the acuteness of Mr. Rosenfeld's observation. . . .

That is not to say that I subscribe to everything Mr. Rosenfeld says. His conclusions are not based on any scholarly investigation that I am aware of. However, I do think it is interesting as a bit of whimsical but clear thinking from the point of view of the layman about what is actually an important and difficult problem in the psychology of religion.

I did, however, feel embarrassed when I read that in the opinion of one of your correspondents the editor of Commentary should select his material in such a way as not to offend Gentile readers. This is a sort of Jewish self-effacement which is most destructive in terms of internal Jewish morale. Current psychoanalytical opinion does support the inference of a significant relationship between food taboos, *kashrut,* and the very basic problem of the social control of sexuality. There are data to support such theories and nothing is to be gained by calling them unscientific, obscene, or pornographic. In fact, I believe that a good deal would be gained by religious leaders from an objective and thorough understanding of the psychic nature and value of such ritual observances.

Mortimer Ostow, MD

New York City

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The American Jewish Pattern

Jews in Transition. By Albert I. Gordon. University of Minnesota Press. 331 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by Oscar Handlin

If we are now troubled by doubts as to what is the place of Jews in American life, that is in part at least because of the fact that there have been so few serious attempts to analyze the evidence. Some twenty years ago Louis Wirth, drawing on Chicago for his material, made one such effort. He interpreted the process of Jewish settlement in the United States as one of assimilation, marked by the gradual dissolution of the ghetto and the steady absorption of its members into the larger society about them. Even in 1928 this formula was not altogether adequate, for there had to be a qualification to account for what seemed to Wirth to be a "return to the ghetto."

In the two decades that have intervened, three new factors have complicated the problems of Jewish life in America—the effect of Hitlerism, the rise of political Zionism, and the end of overseas immigration. Furthermore, the experience of those years has not supported Wirth's analysis; since the end of immigration Jews have gained rather than lost in self-consciousness and in awareness of their identity.

A study of Jews in transition is therefore more than welcome. The subjects of this volume are the twenty thousand Jews of Minneapolis but its implications have a far more general application. The author, for many years a rabbi in that city, draws freely on his wide first-hand knowledge of the place, but in addition brings to his discussion a wealth of sociological and historical data. The result is a description of the life and attitudes of modern Midwestern Jews that, in detail, is often interesting and enlightening.

Among the most notable trends that Rabbi Gordon finds is a general rise in the occupational level of the Jews of the city. Together with the diminishing importance of the immigrant generation, the evening out of economic differences has tended to minimize the kinds of distinctions that divided the community in earlier days. On the other hand, anti-Semitism is still a problem of some consequence, although Jews increasingly have come to recognize that intolerance threatens not them alone, but the whole society in which they live.

Along with changes in the situation of the Jews, there has been a transformation in the internal structure and the meaning of Jewish life. The dietary laws seem almost entirely to have lost their binding quality; where the old forms of cookery are adhered to, it is primarily for sentimental reasons. The high holidays are still observed, and to some extent Passover, but the others are either neglected or invested with new ceremonies. In general, Jews no longer regulate their day to day lives by the traditional code of the Shulchan Aruch. Indeed the whole conception of the good Jew has been modified, so that it emphasizes far less ritual observance and theological belief than charitable and social sympathies.

Jewish social life is still in flux, Rabbi Gordon believes. The old fraternal organizations are losing their hold and the circulation of the Yiddish press is falling. By contrast, the synagogue somehow continues to attract into its fold all sorts of members, and other educational institutions are actually gaining in strength. Finally, although the traditional family life is weakening, the home is as yet strong. Above all there is still a sense of mutual interrelationship; "despite any personal denominational predilections," the Jew of Minneapolis works with and for a united Jewish community.

These trends are significant and for their clarification we are grateful to Rabbi Gordon. But these details as such are, after all, not what concern us most. We seek, and Rabbi Gordon seeks to give us, an insight into the nature of the transition in which Jews are presently involved. At the heart of that change, in Rabbi

Gordon's view, is the negative effect of America on traditional Judaism. Immigration to the United States disrupted the old Jewish way of life. America subjected the newcomers to many alien influences, weakened Orthodoxy, diluted the most fundamental Jewish ideas. In this process there are being distinguished two kinds of Jews, the marginal, those for whom Judaism is simply a liability in the way of complete assimilation, and the affirmative, those who see in Judaism the positive values that induce them to resist assimilation. The survival of the latter is assured through the persistence of anti-Semitism and through the renascence of Israel as a source of Jewish culture. The affirmative Jew will then live in two cultures, one shared with other Americans in the secular aspects of his existence, the other revolving about his religion and nurtured from Israel.

ONE could dispute this point of view on the general grounds that the nature of culture and personality are not such as to admit of this duality. But it will be more instructive to begin by questioning its major assumption, that there was a traditional way of life constant through the centuries, that, as Rabbi Gordon puts it, since the exile in 586 BCE Jews "have held steadfastly to certain ways of thinking concerning God and man."

What, for instance, can Rabbi Gordon have in mind when he refers to the "traditional Jewish home" or the "traditional pattern of Jewish family life"? Does he mean the polygamous family of Arabian Jewry, or the family of 19th-century Poland, or the family of the communal settlements in Israel today? If the American Jewish family is evolving in a direction different from any of these, need it any less be within the Jewish tradition?

What is involved here is the failure to see that Judaism is within history, that its forms are products of peculiarities in time and place. Thus the discussion of beliefs and practices proceeds as if the immigrants of the 1890's brought with them altogether and alone the ideas of Torah, Talmud, and Shulchan Aruch. "No Jewish home in Eastern Europe was without at least one Hebrew book" and every mother hoped her son would be a rabbi. A more realistic analysis would show that more than 25 per cent of Jewish immigrants (1899-1909) above the age of fourteen were illiterate, that there were deep currents of ignorance and superstition, and that the day to day practices and beliefs of these Jews were markedly influenced by the peasant society in which they lived.

The insistence that the Jews, on arrival, were the Jews of Torah and Talmud is significant because it forms the basis of the argument that the effect of life in America is to strip away layer after layer of the Jewishness of the whole Jew as he arrived. Rabbi Gordon is reluctant to admit that America has been at all creative in Jewish experience. Yet one need look no further than the rabbinate itself to discover an institution that is a product of the New World, not of Europe, certainly not of ancient Palestine. For the rabbi who is a skilled administrator, an expert in social work, an eloquent speaker from pulpit and radio, is not the Talmudic scholar of the ghetto, but the minister to his congregation in the American pattern.

The source of these misconceptions is the erroneous view of the situation of the American Jew as that of a man who lives in two cultures, one of which is fed from America, the other to be fed from Israel. The evidence that Rabbi Gordon has gathered with such care seems to me to prove the contrary. American Jews are working out a kind of culture which will be as different from that of Israel in the future as from that of Poland or Spain or Babylon or Palestine in the past. American Jewish culture is taking its form and a good part of its substance from its environment as those others did and will. This is an attribute of its vitality. Where Judaism has not been fossilized, frozen by hostile circumstances, it has grown by response to the world within which it existed.

Breeding Ground for Nazis

REHEARSAL FOR DESTRUCTION: A STUDY OF POLITICAL ANTI-SEMITISM IN IMPERIAL GERMANY. By PAUL MASSING. Harper. 341 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by SAMUEL J. HURWITZ

REHEARSAL FOR DESTRUCTION is an illuminating and often moving account of the tactics of various groups in the Germany of the Kaisers in politically manipulating a latent, widespread, and often virulent anti-Semitism. This full-length study in English of the subject is the second published volume in the *Studies in Prejudice* series undertaken by the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee.

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Rarely a principal concern of the prominent political figures of the era, and never a monopoly of any important political party, anti-Semitism was nevertheless the means, always available and often used, to gain political advantage. Concerned with power, politicians scorned the Biblical injunction to love one's neighbor in favor of an old adage: "He who persecutes Israel becomes a leader." If this adage was not invariably confirmed, its success was sufficiently outstanding. And as the conditions which gave rise to anti-Semitism were not obliterated, a later generation of politicians, in a rage for power, hastened not merely to resurrect slogans half a century old, but also to fulfill their promise in gruesome detail.

In its main outlines, Dr. Massing's story charts the failure of Germany to become a liberal state. "Modern Germany never was able to develop a bourgeois society patterned after the models of Western liberalism." The middle class, either unable or unwilling (and incapacity and disinclination were bound together), never achieved political power and moral leadership. The ideology and values of liberalism, which elsewhere filled the void left by the destruction of feudal society, never took deep root in Germany. There the "feudal" groups remained in political and social control even after they had to a considerable extent lost the economic basis of their prestige. But their hold was precarious; casting about for help to bolster their position, they obtained support from the *Mittelstand* or petty bourgeoisie, i.e., lesser civil servants, shopkeepers, the professional classes, and the like. For the Junkers, anti-Semitism was a tool used, when it was deemed necessary, for winning the support of the *Mittelstand*. For the latter, however, it was a confused expression of social protest. Indeed, at times the protest took the form of simultaneous attacks on Junkers and Jews.

Complete legal emancipation of the Jews in Germany came with national unification. Achieved without fanfare and as a result of little direct agitation or struggle, Jewish emancipation was regarded by the ruling classes rather in the nature of a gift than of a right. Back in 1847 Bismarck, in a speech in the Prussian parliament, had professed to "love" the Jews and had conceded to them all rights except that of holding government position. In the Reich of Bismarck and Wilhelm II the Jews *legally* enjoyed all rights bar none; actually, almost as if to prevent them from "abusing" their privileges, they were tacitly but none the less effectively, barred from the civil and military services.

Beginning with the world depression of 1873, the Jews of Germany had more to concern themselves with than their exclusion from government jobs. One of the consequences of the economic difficulties of the following six years was the undermining of the prestige and prospects of German liberalism. Anti-Semitism in Germany became more than a mere "lunatic fringe" movement. Conservatives as well as National Liberals, Catholics as well as Protestants, Bismarck, the two Wilhelms (Kaiser Friedrich III, who ascended the throne in March 1888 and who is said to have labeled anti-Semitism "the shame of the century," died in June of the same year), eminent university professors, noted and respected figures in business and public life, as well as various radical and disaffected groups, played at times upon anti-Semitic sentiments in the course of their "normal" political activities. Massing relates clearly, and documents thoroughly, the sordid story.

ONLY the socialists emerge morally untarnished, if intellectually naive. Holding with Bebel that "anti-Semitism was the socialism of fools," they resolutely set themselves against any attempt to exploit the rich vein of prejudice that was at hand. For them, anti-Semitism was but an instrument wielded by the enemies of progress to hamper the inevitable evolution of a classless society in which anti-Semitism, along with the other evils of capitalism, would disappear. Never, in their efforts to win over the masses, did the socialists single out the Jews for attack, even when expediency beckoned.

Yet Massing's criticism of the socialists' "chronic underestimation" of the significance of anti-Semitism, and of their "dogmatic thinking," is keen and perceptive. Devoting the last quarter of his two-hundred-page text and almost one-half of his documentary appendix to "socialism and anti-Semitism," he clearly demonstrates the ingenuousness of the socialists on this issue. It is clear that the Social Democrats had no inkling of how malignant racism could become.

Massing excels in demonstrating the inadequacies of the Social Democrats in dealing with anti-Semitism. However, in his own analysis of the problem he tends to forget his own strictures and seems inclined to rely upon not unsimilar inadequacies. "Why," he raises the question at one point, "did anti-Semitism become the 'natural' outlet for resentment which the objective process of capitalism engendered in specific groups?" But like the rest of us, he is much better at raising questions than at answering them. He relies too often on such general phrases as "socio-economic" and "socio-political" which cloak the need for further study and analysis. This is unfortunate, for generalities concerning capitalism have not been too helpful in understanding anti-Semitism.

Jehudah Halevi

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEHUDAH HALEVI. By RUDOLF KAYSER. Translated from the German by FRANK GAYNOR. Philosophical Library. 176 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by DAVID DAICHES

This is a thoroughly unsatisfactory book, badly translated from the German. It is full of pretentious and untenable generalizations, repetitions, confusions, half-truths, misunderstandings, and downright errors. The author admits in his introduction that his book "does not claim to be a learned tome," but the confession hardly prepares us for the muddled re-hash of secondary sources that follows.

In spite of the title, only four of the eleven chapters deal with Jehudah Halevi. The first six chapters attempt to fill in the historical and cultural background, giving some account of the rise and fall of Islamic Spain and of the Jewish life which flourished there, while the final chapter, for reasons that are not made clear, deals with Maimonides. The reader looking for a serious study of Jehudah Halevi's background and work will be disappointed: there is neither a coherent picture of the intellectual and social environment nor is there any adequate criticism or appreciation of Halevi's poetry. With a breathless perfunctoriness Mr. Kayser jumps around from point to point, strewing his path with dubious aphorisms and historical errors.

It would be an ungrateful task to list here all of the mistakes and confusions in this short book, but some at least must be mentioned if only to protect the reviewer from the suspicion of malice. We are not so much concerned with the pretentious generalizations, though these are sufficiently annoying. Nor are the numerous facile contrasts between an undifferentiated "Oriental" and the "Occidental" mind among the most serious offences.

Errors of fact, however, are less excusable because more easily avoided. Discussing the work and environment of Solomon ibn Gabirol, Mr. Kayser contrasts Gabirol's lot with that of his co-religionists in northern Europe. "In the North, Jews lived in Ghettos, closed in by the lifeless walls of rationalistic Talmudists." Ibn Gabirol died in the middle of the 11th century: ghettos did not even begin to emerge in Europe until after the Third Lateran Council of 1179—which, among other anti-Jewish provisions, forbade Christians to lodge amongst Jews—and they only began to be common after 1400. To suggest that Jews in other parts of Europe were living in ghettos during the "golden age" of Jews in Spain is absurd. As for "the lifeless walls of rationalistic Talmudists"—this is clearly an expression of personal prejudice.

Mr. Kayser's contempt for the *galut* outside Spain leads him again and again to make some derogatory remark about Jewish life and thought elsewhere in medieval Europe. Jehudah Halevi is described as "this absolutely unorthodox Jew, opposed to petrified rabbinism in its every form." How anybody who has read the third book of Halevi's *Kitab al Khazari*, with its bitter attack on the Karaites and eloquent defense of the Talmud and of rabbinical tradition, can hold this view, is difficult to understand. Halevi was, in fact, squarely in the rabbinical tradition in his general position, and to seek to differentiate at every turn between the products of Spanish-Jewish culture and other phases of European Jewish thought in the way that Mr. Kayser does is to allow prejudice to distort one's reading of history. Not that the cultural climate during the Spanish golden age was not immeasurably healthier for Jews than it was later on in Europe, but this does not mean that in doctrine and attitude the work of the Spanish Jews was hostile to rabbinical Judaism. It is hard to believe that Mr. Kayser has ever really examined the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides, although he refers to it in his final chapter: if ever a book breathed "rabbinical scholasticism," this work of Maimonides does so: yet Maimonides is included as a great representative of that anti-rabbinical freedom which Mr. Kayser sees as the characteristic of Spanish Jews.

It might be objected that these are errors of opinion rather than of fact, though I cannot see how such a claim could be sustained. But we have not far to seek for errors of fact of the simplest kind. On page 163 the Kaddish is described as "the supplication for deliverance"—a completely erroneous description of that prayer.

One further example will have to suffice: it is a single sentence from Chapter 5: "In modern days, Robert Browning felt so strongly attracted to his [Ibn Ezra's] personality that he made him rank with Paracelsus and *Abbé Vogler,* making him the hero of his poem, *Rabbi ben Ezra and Abbé Vogler,* in which he linked Ezra's ideas with his own." As everybody knows, the title of Browning's poem is *Abt Vogler,* and *Rabbi ben Ezra* is a separate poem. The identification of Browning's rabbi with Ibn Ezra is at best purely nominal, and Browning is far from "linking Ibn Ezra's ideas with his own." On the same page Mr. Kayser tells us that Ibn Ezra's "self-knowledge was quite bitter and pessimistic"—a far cry indeed from the robust optimism of Browning's ben Ezra!

One suspects that part of the confusion in the sentence about Browning is to be blamed on the translator, who seems to have an imperfect knowledge of English. The book abounds in such phrases as "aloof of life," "tried to pretend being Arabs," "he would sing the praises of his friends like of beloved women," "like for Moslem philosophy, for Jewish philosophy, too, there began a dualism. . . ." Sometimes German idioms are translated literally into English, sounding awkward or even nonsensical; non-English forms of classical names are used (e.g., "Plotin" for Plotinus, "Galien" for Galen); the letter "s" is used as in German but not as in English, to indicate the "z" sound, and so we have the Sohar (Zohar), *Semiroth* (*Zemiroth*), etc. We find phrases like "*Piutim* poetry," using "*piutim,*" which is a plural noun, as though it were an adjective. (This is like talking of "sonnets poetry" or "odes poetry.")

After this it might seem peevish to complain that indifferent translations of Hebrew poems are used (e.g., Zangwill's slick and fancy versions of Ibn Gabirol) or that the quotations from the references to the *Kitab al Khazari* cite Hirschfeld's translation in the edition of 1906 rather than the considerably improved revised edition of 1931. Perhaps I should not even mention that the book teems with misprints and a number of pages are misplaced.

Trade Unions: Real and "Ideal"

TRADE UNIONS IN THE NEW SOCIETY. By HAROLD J. LASKI. Viking. 181 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by MARTIN DIAMOND

THE title of Mr. Laski's latest book suggests a subject of considerable significance and one badly in need of fresh theoretical treatment. Unfortunately he fails quite completely the promise of the title. There is no solid substance to his understanding of what American trade unions are really like and his treatment of the "new society" turns out to be a standard Marxist critique of the old one. By "new society" he apparently does not mean a democratically planned economy; he refers only incidentally and infrequently to recent British experience. Nor is he really concerned with modern developments in American capitalism, and their effect upon trade unions, which have led other observers to consider the present situation significantly new. What changes Laski does acknowledge he does not permit to impede the smooth flow of his analysis.

The disturbing irregularities of the specific are easily smoothed away in the Marxian formulations Laski enjoys. By now one expects from the phrasing of that point of view a certain classical touch. Laski does not disappoint:

"... The cases both of Mussolini and Hitler are only the major instances of our time in which business and the state power become almost interchangeable terms. . . . Granted the private ownership of the means of production, political democracy is not seldom a facade behind which the great corporations prepare a social order the character of which is not unlike that of the corporate state."

Based upon this sort of analysis of capitalism, Laski has a political strategy and program to urge upon American labor. He argues that unions by their very nature pose problems insoluble within the capitalist framework. If only in self-defense, they must harness the state power which is now usually ranged on the side of big business. It follows, then, that labor must accept a long-run social philosophy, form its own political party, and ultimately bring about the socialist reconstruction of society.

His position differs sharply from what has been the dominant approach in this country, the "job control" theory of Professor Selig Perlman and the Wisconsin School. That theory explains trade unionism as the organized expression of a "manualist mentality" which limits itself to controlling the conditions of employment at the point where jobs originate and which, when matured, eschews the abstract ideological appeals of intellectuals. The emphasis is empirical, on what trade unions have really been; Perlman has opposed any view of labor which sees it as "an abstract mass in the grip of an abstract force." It should be added that Professor Perlman has favored a rather conservative social philosophy which one may, while accepting his analytical theory, reject on other grounds.

Laski discusses his disagreement with Perlman but never makes clear just how much of Perlman he rejects. Obviously he does not accept Perlman's philosophy but he only hints that the theory as well is invalid. And he never explicitly challenges Perlman's theory as a method of accounting for the behavior of American unions nor does he offer an alternative explanation of his own. In fact, Laski is little concerned with the investigation of actual trade unions; in characteristically Marxist fashion, he deals primarily with the role labor *ought* to play in ushering in the new society. Perlman emphasizes what labor *does;* Laski what it *should* do. Theories of the labor movement have generally been polarized into these two tendencies.

The Marxist, with his eye fixed on the distant (and immanent) goal, tends to underestimate the toughness and resiliency of things as they are. To the Marxist, American business unionism is somehow an aberration from true unionism, a temporary unwillingness to perform the role History has assigned to Labor. Laski of course does not put it so crudely, nor is he, unfortunately, so explicit. He simply ignores the problem of explaining unions as they actually are and gives himself over wholly to the task of exhortation. The more unions behave in contrary fashion to his underlying theory, the more impassioned the exhortation. But precisely because his understanding of trade unionism is fuzzy, his rhetoric is unpersuasive.

It is perhaps further evidence of Laski's casual regard for unions in the real that he cites no work in the field published at a date later than 1936; the sizable literature of the last thirteen years seems to have escaped his notice. And surely he is on somewhat dubious ground in citing the Pullman strike (1894), the Homestead Steel Strike (1892), and the great railway strikes of 1877 as cases highly relevant to the present discussion.

Berlin's Jews

CHRISTIAN VOSS UND DIE STERNE. By HERTHA VON GEBHARDT. Berlin, Cornelsen Verlag. 367 pp.

Reviewed by ALFRED WERNER

THE author of this novel about Gentiles and Jews in wartime Berlin has an interesting background. Born in 1896, the daughter of a distinguished professor of political law at the University of Berlin, and married to a Prussian aristocrat, Hertha von Gebhardt is one-quarter Jewish, being related to such famous Jews as Veitel Heine Ephraim, mintmaster of Frederick the Great; the German Egyptologist and novelist Georg Ebers; and Bernhard Wolff, founder of the Wolff Telegraph Bureau, the successor of which was the Nazi Deutsches Nachrichten-Bureau. By 1933 she had several novels to her credit. Although an anti-Nazi, she remained in the Reich in order to be with her aged parents, and was tolerated as a *Mischling* (part-Aryan). After the war, in 1945, Frau von Gebhardt was elected to the board of directors of the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller, the German writers' association.

THE theme of Frau von Gebhardt's present novel has been touched on before, in Ruth Andreas-Friedrich's diary, *Berlin Underground.* In another diary, Josef Goebbels complains on March 11, 1943 about the difficulty of making Berlin completely *judenrein:* "The evacuation of Jews from Berlin has led to a number of untoward happenings. The scheduled arrest of all Jews on one day has proved

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a flash in the pan because of the shortsighted behavior of industrialists who warned the Jews in time. We therefore failed to lay our hands on about 4,000. They are now wandering about Berlin without homes, are not registered with the police and are naturally quite a public danger."

While there were industrialists who, whether for humanitarian reasons or because they anticipated Hitler's defeat, forewarned some of the Jews who worked in their factories, the present novel shows us only intellectuals, middle-class people, and workers fraternizing with the Jews in Berlin during the war. Among these people who defied Nazism is the hero, Dr. Christian Voss, a young idealist who stems from small-town intelligentsia. Having wasted three costly years at the front, he returns to civilian life with impaired health and a deep contempt for everything Hitler stands for. There are also: his employer, Privy Counselor Vierordt, who is too much of an old-fashioned humanist to stomach Nazism; Pastor Sauter, who takes his Christianity seriously; an old servant, Dora, ardently loyal to her Jewish employers; a good-hearted shopkeeper, Frau Moltke, who smuggles food into the bags of her Jewish customers; and a few—too few—other decent individuals.

The remnants of once-proud Berlin Jewry live in constant fear for their lives in an ersatz ghetto, most of them being worked to death as slave laborers in factories, sewers, railroad stations; they are miserably paid, wear shabby clothes, and eat only scraps and left-overs. Trapped in Berlin by the war, they cannot emigrate; all know that sooner or later they will be arrested and deported.

Yet life goes on despite all hardships. There is intelligent, educated Irene Sarah Jonas, whose father and brother were murdered by the Nazis, who had to abandon her dream of becoming a lawyer—and who suddenly discovers that she has fallen in love with a Gentile who defended her in Frau Moltke's shop against an anti-Semitic housewife. Both Irene and her "Krischan" Voss recognize the danger and absurdity of their passion but are unable to suppress it. Then there is the lawyer and book-lover, Dr. Kurt Israel Frankfurter, who had won the Iron Cross in World War I; unwilling to leave "his" Germany, he turns a deaf ear to the pleas of his equally sophisticated, but more practical common-law wife, Edith Sarah Bromberger, who keeps begging him to arrange an escape for both of them. We meet two kind-hearted musicians, one of them an old lady, the other a lad of twenty; a strong and determined woman doctor; an old, simple, somewhat unpleasant Jew; a Jewish girl who, raised as a Christian, wants to embrace the Jewish faith; and a precocious twelve-year-old boy, nick-named "Prince of the Desert," who talks about concentration camps and exterminations the way other children talk about games.

Some of the dramatic incidents—unquestionably inspired by reality—are not easy to forget. A septuagenarian publisher, idealistic and profoundly German, bequeathes to Dr. Frankfurter all the books his firm has ever issued. Unable to obtain poison, the old Jew is deported to Theresienstadt, but not before having signed a "confession" that he had been a traitor to the fatherland. A young man volunteers for front-line service in order to protect his Jewish mother, the widow of an "Aryan"; rejected as a *Mischling*, he shoots his mother and himself. Old Clara Sarah Goldsticker plays Beethoven while movers wait to take her concert piano away—she knows she will be sent to a death camp the next day. . . .

A few Jews save themselves by posing as "Aryans," living on as "U-boats" on the strength of forged documents. But Herr Dr. Frankfurter and his lady have bad luck: while waiting in a café for the man who is to bring them the life-saving papers, they are arrested by the Gestapo. Irene Jonas, however, manages to cast off her identity more effectively; officially listed as a suicide by drowning in the Wannsee, she survives, a prisoner of hope, carefully hidden away in a room by her fiancé, Dr. Voss. But there is no happy ending: she is killed by an Allied bomb while trying to rescue some of Christian's belongings during an air raid.

The author does not idealize her characters. Even some of the good Germans who loathe Nazism are not completely free of prejudice against the Jews; and many of these anti-Nazis are afraid of any kind of organized action. Some Germans try to excuse themselves by emphasizing their duty to the fatherland, but Pastor Sauter tells them bluntly they are evading the issue: "Our conscience knows clearly what we are up against: we have to choose between betraying our country or betraying the Lord. And the Germans, under these circumstances, prefer to do the latter."

The Germans are doomed, the pastor continues, unless it pleases the Lord to forgive them. But Irene Jonas, the frail Jewess with the yellow star on her breast, gently corrects him with a statement that will hardly go unchallenged: "There is also need for forgiveness on the part of human beings. And I believe that forgiveness is the first task for ourselves who have been so humiliated."

But otherwise there is little editorializing in this well-constructed, well-written, outspoken and honest, if controversial, novel.

Hero on the Loose

BAXTER BERNSTEIN: A HERO OF SORTS. By STEPHEN SELEY. Scribner's. 239 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by PAUL GOODMAN

THE first part of this book is first rate. There is a form of social criticism, inevitably increasing in vogue, that consists in affirming the very opposite of the virtues and aspirations that one is supposed to approve (this is criticism of mores), or even that it is common sense to approve (this is metaphysical dismay, despair, disgust). Where the accepted values are not spectacularly successful in making us happy, it is reasonable to energize our heroes with different values. This "transvaluation of values" is either rationally proved, as by André Gide; or lyrically proved, as when Jean Genêt waves his red rag in front of the bulls; or proved by overwhelming the scene with feces and foolishness, as Louis-Ferdinand Céline does. Now Seley presents us with his "hero of sorts" more quietly, simply affirming him by refusing to regard anything else as interesting, or justified or especially unjustified; very simply, avoiding also the theatrical stoicism of the Existentialists. Baxter is a real no-good, about to run out, explaining his present defections by a past defection (not having fought in the Spanish Civil War), not even callous or guiltless but his guilt will not move him, rationalizing and not believing in the rationalization yet not tempted to analyze any deeper, etc., etc. In fact Baxter promises to be a devastating hero who could bring the world to a salutary standstill; and also a by no means impossible ideal for men to attain to.

SO OUR hero, who believes that he cowardly ran away from the more justifiable Spanish war (but perhaps his instincts served him well there too), now is dodging the draft, hibernating in Mexico; unbuoyed by principles he drifts back to New Orleans; but he ends up in Mexico after all. In each place he tends to be deserting some other man's wife who relies on him for her rescue; and he is in full flight from the homosexual threat; but there is always plenty of liquor.

Unfortunately, instead of ponderously sagging on to ever new failures that leave himself and the world rather like they are, Baxter soon begins to repeat a pattern, and this pattern at once reveals rather banal underlying psychological causes that become clear to the reader and therefore must be treated, but they are not treated. There is a boring compulsion to repeat. So Baxter does not have a viable way of life after all, and it is not he that we can follow to glory.

In style, this book is so old-fashioned, in the pseudo-stream-of-consciousness of the 20's, that I at least am completely disarmed. It is a pleasure to meet this choppy-picturesque again. But Seley's forte is plain fun, and he is often very funny.

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